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EDF ENERGY London and South of England Media Awards

FREE

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk May 22, 2016

North & West edition No 713

EXCLUSIVE

Three grammars face strike threat

Unprecedented action as funding squeeze starts to suffocate

SPORT

Maidstone United's return to the top

Incredible on-going revival of former Football League club

EXCLUSIVE

Farron: County needs to stay in

Liberal Democrats leader writes for KoS on why county should back remain bid

ENTERTAINMENT

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Handling hot potatoes of schools and the EU

WHEN the date for the EU referendum was set everyone expected a variety of clearly explained arguments for staying in or opting out.

We were all patient, waiting for the initial flurry of angry words to subside and rational thought and the options put before us.

Now, a month before we head to the polls, it has become very clear, that is not going to happen.

Primarily, of course, is that there simply are no wrong or right answers. No-one has a crystal ball to peer into the future of two alternative realities and explain what is going to happen.

The result, is that every single debate on the issue ends up being something of a shouting match - the 'remain' brigade telling tales of woe if we opt out, the 'leave' campaign telling tales of woe should we remain.

Inside today's issue we have a number of articles on the topic – most interesting, perhaps, is a specially written piece by Lib Dem leader Tim Farron which speaks directly to those of us living here. Plenty will agree, plenty will oppose, but it is, at least, a rare moment of calm, rational campaigning which for that alone, is refreshing.

For the more tit-for-tat approach, our letters page continues to debate the pros and cons in varying levels of rationality.

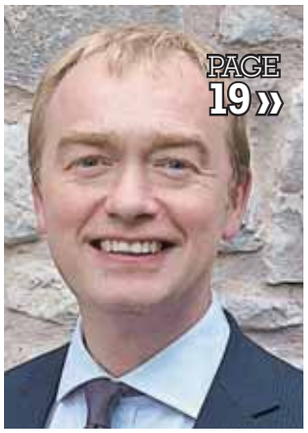
If the referendum leaves you cold, then I'd recommend turning to page 11 for our exclusive on a crisis in our grammar schools. It's another topic drenched in politics. There is some bitter irony that for a government so supportive of the controversial selective system, it has reduced funding so dramatically rebellion is now erupting.

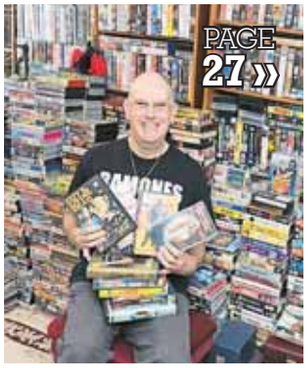


Editor **Chris Britcher**

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Police prepare as groups plan latest Dover protest

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk



DOVER: Scenes turned ugly when demonstrating groups clashed earlier this year

KENT Police are preparing for trouble in Dover ahead of planned demonstrations in the port town next weekend.

It comes just weeks after another demonstration in Dover, during which a dozen people were arrested after scenes turned ugly following protests from a right-wing group and anti-fascist opposition.

Local MP Charlie Elphicke was widely criticised at the time for tweeting: "Militant hard left occupying port road at Dover. Unwelcome, damaging to our nation's economy and the town. Go away."

He then followed it up by slamming the fascist group.

The exact timings and locations of these demonstrations remain unconfirmed by organisers but officers are planning a "proportionate response" that will allow the force to meet its legal obligation to 'facilitate peaceful protest'.

At least 100 right-wing demonstrators are currently expected to attend on Saturday, while an unconfirmed number of left-wing counter-demonstrators are intent on visiting at the same time.

Groups cannot be prevented from entering the town of Dover or protesting so long as the demonstration – believed to be an anti-immigration march – is peaceful and legitimate.

As part of the policing response, there will be additional units including mounted police officers.

Deputy Chief Constable Paul Brandon said: "There will be disruption in Dover over the weekend as a result, which, even with all the best plans in place, cannot be avoided.

"The weekend is a Bank Holiday which historically sees increased tourist traffic for the Port of Dover and we know there are other local events planned.

"Our advice to those visiting the town for the weekend is to plan ahead, regardless of the purpose of your visit.

"We believe that if people are warned in advance about potential disruption, they can make arrangements to avoid getting caught up in the demonstrations and go about their business."

Police officers' response to another protest back in January was described as 'proportionate', 'justifiable' and 'appropriate', according to an independent report.

Our beaches fly the flag as awards set to boost tourism industry again

THE county's tourism industry got a well-timed shot in the arm this week after it was awarded the most Blue Flag beaches in the UK.

Eleven of our beaches now have Blue Flag status; seen as the gold standard for clean water and good facilities.

That's up from nine the last time the list was revealed - and more than both Cornwall and Devon, each of which has eight.

Awarded by Keep Britain Tidy, beaches receiving the accolade include Leysdown, Minster Leas and Sheerness on Sheppey; Minnis Bay, West Bay, St Mildreds, Ramsgate Main Sands, Botany Bay, Joss Bay and Stone Bay in Thanet; and Tankerton near Whitstable.

Only 68 beaches across the country received the award, including 16 in the south-east as a whole.

The county also put in a strong showing in Keep Britain's Tidy's seaside awards, winning nine in total.

Marketing director Jennifer Yard, of tourism champions Visit Kent, said: "Having Blue Flag status is hugely important to any seaside destination – the fact that so much of our coastline has this world-renowned seal of approval makes us all the more appealing to holiday makers as we near the summer season."

Jo James, chief executive of the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, says the awards will boost the economy.

She explained: "It is great news for businesses and great for the economy, especially if you take into account the trend for 'staycations'.

"In terms of international visitors, too, we have got a great story that Visit Kent and others can set out.

"It has a knock-on effect on the wider economy, of course. Every tourist business has a supply chain and it ripples down the local supply chains, so it really does see them generate the local economy.

"It really is good news for the local area, and it is something that should be maximised."

Body found off Strood Pier in hunt for missing man

A BODY was discovered in the water at Strood Pier in Rochester on Wednesday evening.

Kent Police were called at around 5.15pm and went to the scene with members of Secamb and the Coastguard.

Formal identification will not take place until next week, but the family of missing grandfather of five Nigel Knights have been informed.

Mr Knights, 63, was last seen at Morrisons in Strood on Monday, May 9 at 8pm.

A facebook page, FindNigel-Knights, has received more than 900 likes from Kent residents trying to help and received celebrity attention when One Direction star Louis Tomlinson asked his fans to share details online.

Large octopus discovered off the coast of Herne Bay

AN OCTOPUS almost two feet wide has been spotted in Herne Bay.

Local health and safety manager Alex Sturridge, 34, was in the water near his home with his family when he spotted the creature.

He said: ''We were walking along and the tide was just coming in. We were paddling out and my sister spotted the octopus.

''The water was about a foot deep, and the octopus was bobbing along on the top.

''I was surprised when it started swimming towards the shore. We stood in front of it to encourage it to go back out again, and it settled on the seabed.

''The tide was coming in quite quickly by then, and that was the last we saw of it.''

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Roy Blackman funeral: Friends bid final farewell

THE funeral of a pensioner murdered in his Biddenden cottage in March took place on Wednesday.

Friends and family gathered at St Michael's Church in Smarden to pay their respects to the businessman.

Roy Blackman, 73, was found with multiple blunt force injuries at his home in Headcorn Road on March 21.

His family paid tribute to "a kind, wise and private man" who was a self-taught car mechanic that enjoyed a hobby of breeding rare wildfowl.

William Smith, 36, died during a planned police operation in Goudhurst on May 1 after two firearms officers discharged their weapons twice each.

A 37-year-old man from Staplehurst has been charged with murder.

CPRE hit outs at 'blight' caused by plans to build 12,000 homes on AONB

By Tom Pyman

PLANS to develop a garden town in Shepway could "blight" an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), according to opposition groups.

The proposals, earmarked for the area surrounding Otterpool Manor Farm, could see as many as 12,000 homes being built over the next 30 years within easy reach of nearby villages, towns and the countryside, but with its own businesses, schools and parks.

However, campaign groups have expressed concerns about the impact the development could have on the Kent Downs and surrounding landscape.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)'s Kent arm says it has fought hard in the past to halt urbanisation, including plans to build 400 houses on the Folkestone Racecourse site, which were subsequently thrown out.

Director Hilary Newport said:



SITE: Homes plans for Shepway

"The garden village principles have merit, but CPRE believes that housing delivery should focus on putting effort into the regeneration of those brownfield sites that blight urban areas and communities.

"This site, by contrast, is in open countryside, near villages that are already struggling under the pressure of overdevelopment, and would be a huge intrusion on the landscape.

"Indeed the Kent Downs AONB surrounds this area on three sides: walkers and riders on the North Downs Way national trail to the north would have their views across open landscape blighted."

Meanwhile, Ukip, the opposition party on Shepway council, says it is "broadly in favour" of the plans, but also expressed disappointment that existing brownfield land has not been identified for the project.

Last week we reported on how Folkestone and Hythe MP Damian Collins had backed the plans, describing the ambitious scheme as "bold".

If approved by the cabinet in June, it will form part of this expression of interest to the government this summer.

The council has promised at least 30 per cent of the land identified for the project would be kept as green space.



GUILTY: Lauren Cox

Teacher jailed for seducing teenage boy

A SCHOOL teacher who groomed a teenage boy at an Orpington school has been jailed for 12 months.

Lauren Cox, 27, had previously pleaded guilty to five counts of sexual activity with a child in a position of trust.

Cox' victim, aged 16, admitted the abuse last year and Cox, of Hazelwood Heights, Oxted, was arrested on September 16.

She first met the boy in 2012 just weeks after starting her job at the school, and the victim said they formed a close relationship.

She began a sexual relationship with the teenager in January 2015, meeting after school and during school holidays but the student ended it in August..

As well as a jail term, Cox must also spend 10 years on the Sex Offender's register.

A spokesperson for NSPCC said: "What makes this case particularly shocking is that Cox was a teacher. She had a duty of care, instead she pursued a sexual relationship with a young boy.

"Her actions have clearly had a devastating impact on her victim's life and education.

"Victims of sexual abuse need significant support to rebuild their lives."

Demo brick thrower gets 20 months in jail

A THUG who threw bricks and other objects at both left and right-wing demonstrators parading on the streets of Dover, has been jailed for 20 months.

Aaron Buttress, 26, was one of more than 50 people arrested so far in connection with disturbances in the port town on January 30.

He was charged with violent disorder after being caught on CCTV throwing objects at demonstrators from both sides.

Buttress pleaded guilty and was sentenced at Canterbury Crown Court on Monday.

Meanwhile, Syed Bokhari, 29, of Hayes, London, received a 12-month community order and must carry out 150 hours of unpaid work after pleading guilty to fighting during the demonstrations. He was sentenced at Thanet Magistrates' Court.

Chief Supt Andrea Bishop said: "My officers are continuing to work tirelessly to identify all those responsible for offences committed both before and during the demonstrations in January."

Bolton's baby born on high speed train

HENRY Bolton, Ukip's candidate for the role of Kent police and crime commissioner, has become a father for the third time after his wife gave birth on a Southeastern high-speed train.

Mr Bolton, who lives in Folkestone, and finished second in the polls for the role behind Conservative Matthew Scott earlier this month, said daughter Victoria was born at 5pm on the train at St Pancras.

He went on to thank paramedics and staff from the station and the Southeastern service for their assistance on the service from Ashford International.

Mr Scott and Labour PCC candidate Tristan Osborne both sent messages of congratulations.

Southeastern spokesman John Staples said: "The mum was on the train when she went into labour as it arrived at St Pancras.

"Another passenger raised the alarm and our train and platform crews cleared the carriage and prevented others from getting on when it arrived at the station to allow as much privacy as possible while paramedics attended."

Club buys freehold of ground from council

JUST days after Ebbsfleet United's dreams of promotion back to the National League – which feeds the Football League – were shattered by Kent rivals Maidstone, the club had something to cheer after securing the freehold title of its home ground.

It purchased Stonebridge Road from Gravesham Borough Council.

It comes as work begins on the new £5m main stand at the ground, and the installation of a new pitch.

Club director Stuart Butler-Gallie said: "The purchase of Stonebridge Road is a key stage in securing the future of this club.

"The land now belongs to the club and as with all funds committed by Dr Abdulla Al-Humaidi [of club owners KEH which is also behind the multi-billion pound London Paramount project], this will be fully capitalised and leaves the club debt-free.

"This is a huge personal commitment from Dr Abdulla and should be acknowledged as such."

Ebbsfleet were beaten on penalties by Maidstone last Saturday following a 2-2 draw in the play-off final.

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Toxic algae in lake leaves dog owner facing £13,000 vets bill

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A DOG walker has been slapped with a £13,000 vet bill after a number of pets entered a Dartford lake infected with toxic algae.

Kent Police this week ruled out foul play during their investigation into the deaths of three dogs at Brooklands Lakes, near Powder Mill in Dartford, with the Environment Agency blaming Blue-Green Algae as the cause, in an incident that left another ten dogs affected.

Dartford Borough Council then took the decision to close the lakes on Tuesday following the discovery of the algae which is also harmful to humans.

Now, Ineta Kevin, of the Top Dog Training School & Home Boarding in Swaledale Road, has launched a crowdfunding page to help raise money for her beloved canines.

She said: "On the news they said it is the last beautiful day and then it will get cold, I thought to myself, what an amazing opportunity to take dogs swimming.

"We put all the dogs in the car and went, they were so happy, running around, splashing, chasing the ball.

"Then we decided it's time to go and Pippa went into what looked like epileptic fit. Then Marley, then Stanley."



CLOSED: Brooklands Lakes in Dartford was the scene of three dog deaths this week

She drove the dogs straight to the Accident & Emergency unit of Parkvets Veterinary Hospital in Foots Cray, Sidcup.

The vets worked on the animals for about 45 minutes, but ultimately three died and the rest were left with life-long damage, including two still in hospital.

"My insurance won't cover such a great cost so we are pleading everyone to help as much as you can," she added.

"I haven't been myself since and still all my family is devastated as pups were under my care."

Despite the discovery, there is nothing the council can do to remove the algae or prevent it growing.

Brooklands Lakes will remain closed until the results of the further analysis have been received.

More than £1,000 has already been raised to help the cause.

Those wishing to donate can do so at http://bit.ly/1OQpIDK

Bomb squad called as school evacuated

A SCHOOL had to be evacuated this week after an unexploded bomb, from the Second World War, was unearthed.

Pupils at Holy Trinity School in Gravesend were ushered out of the building on Tuesday after the discovery was made.

The Ministry of Defense's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team attended and took the explosive away for safe detonation.

PCC's office loses its chief finance officer

CHIEF finance officer for Kent's police and crime commissioner, Sean Nolan, has left just two weeks after Matthew Scott replaced Ann Barnes.

Mr Nolan will join the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) this summer in a national role advising on local government finance.

Postcode's a lottery

KENT postcode ME is one of the luckiest locations for National Lottery winning tickets, it was revealed this week.

It came sixth in the country. The most successful places to buy your tickets are in the RM postcode for Romford, TS for Cleveland, WA for Warrington and L for Liverpool. Just above ME is IG for Ilford – another Essex town.

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Agonising wait after roofer found six years later in Spain



THE mother of a Sittingbourne roofer found in Spain after vanishing for six years says she has considered he may not want her back in his life.

Matthew Green, 32, disappeared from his home in May 2010 after saying he was going to visit friends in London for the weekend.

Now his parents, Jim and Pauline, have been told he has been found alive and is refusing help and medicine at a psychiatric ward in Spain.

When asked if her son may not want to revive contact with his family after so long away, Mrs Green said: "I have thought about that but I have also thought that there must be a glimmer, that he does want us back in his life."

The discovery came when an officer arrived at the couple's house on May 3 to give them the news that their son had been found safe.

He came to the attention of the Spanish authorities because he was "acting oddly" and had been taken into care for assessment.

After initially being told they could not be put in direct contact with him because of data protection laws, Mrs Green received an email from a doctor at the unit he is being held at.

Gills stadium plans seen by government minister

PLANS for a new stadium for Gillingham FC were discussed with a government minister this week.

Mark Francois, minister for Thames Gateway, visited Priestfield on Friday to hear proposals from club chairman Paul Scally.

Also taking part were the MP for Gillingham and Rainham, Rehman Chishti, Medway councillors Howard Doe and Rodney Chambers, and senior project manager of Berkeley Homes, Peter Lawlor, to discuss the Victory Pier development.

Gillingham have long looked to move away from their current Priestfield base, feeling it will not be a viable option in future years.

In 2012, Mr Scally revealed plans for a stadium at Medway Village, at Mill Hill near their training ground at Beeching's Cross.

As well as the 15-18,000 seater stadium, the site would also include a hotel, fast food restaurants, supermarket, fitness centre, shops, nursery, and a tennis academy, but a landowner refused to sell her plot to make way for the stadium, so proposals were redrawn.

Two years later, Gillingham submitted plans to build the biggest stadium in League One to Medway council but it was met with more opposition, after hundreds of residents signed a petition warning that approving the plans would snowball into parcels of land across the area being swallowed up for development.

Bunker boost at course

POULT Wood Golf Course in Tonbridge is getting a £40,000 refurbishment.

The work, financed by operator Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, includes reshaping bunkers and improving pathways.

Work got under way last week and is expected to take three weeks.

School mourns head

TRIBUTES have been paid to the founding head teacher of Ashford's Towers School, Geoffrey Foster, who has passed away at the age of 91.

Mr Foster was head from 1967 to 1985. A funeral service will be held on May 27 at Wye Church at 1.30pm.

Picnic's £10k prize hope

TUNBRIDGE Wells' popular community event Picnic in the Park is in the running for a £10,000 Church Community Project prize.

Each summer the project team provide free refreshments and entertainment for people to come together and make new friends in the town's Calverley Grounds.

Court for Costa crash

AN 86-YEAR-OLD man who crashed into a coffee shop in Westerham on Christmas Eve, leaving a pensioner dead, will appear at Sevenoaks Magistrates' Court on July 5.

Valerie Deakin, 74, from Udimore near Rye, died after a car ploughed through Costa in The Green last year.



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Top Three Stories



1. Swale cabinet shake-up

Members trimmed from nine to seven

2. Ashford murder charge

Darren McKay due before virtual court

3. Eurostar bookings up

Next month's Euro 2016 is the reason

The Essential Guide:



...to Dreamland

Everything you need to know about Margate's amusement park



FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: Around 20 firefighters were called out to Northfleet this week for a training exercise to test how they would respond to a chemical leak at a distribution centre in Crete Hall Road. See page 24 for the full story.

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Top Three Blogs



1. Why Folkestone is great

Five things we love about the harbour town

2. Straight outta uni

A young man's first step in the adult world

3. Stand up to terrorism

Fear must not make us put off plans to travel

Results of the *KoS* Online Poll

Will plain packaging make you less likely to smoke?

1. Yes - 13%
2. No - 63%
3. I'm not sure - 0%
4. I don't smoke anyway - 24%

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Strike plans at THREE grammars

EXCLUSIVE: Funding cuts and resulting job losses are forcing staff at our selectives to take drastic action never seen before...

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

THREE of Kent's most highly respected grammar schools stand on the brink of unprecedented strike action in a remarkable rebellion by teaching staff.

As reported in last week's KoS, teachers at Canterbury's Simon Langton Girls' Grammar (SLGGS) have been in talks with union representatives over taking industrial action as part of an increasingly bitter dispute over moves to become an academy.

In what is known as an 'indicative ballot', organised by the National Union of Teachers (NUT), to gauge possible support for a more formal vote, teachers at the selective in Old Dover Road voted in support of a walkout.

It came a little over a week after pupils staged a remarkable protest during the school day – much to the embarrassment of increasingly under pressure head teacher Jane Robinson.

Calls for Mrs Robinson to step down have only intensified this week, with staff believed to be prepared to go on strike if the academisation plans are not dropped. A crunch governors' meeting planned for Wednesday to vote on the proposals was this week delayed after the intervention of top Kent County Council officials (see over).

However, KoS can today reveal the SLGGS is far from the only grammar facing industrial action by disgruntled teachers.

We can exclusively reveal the prestigious Cranbrook School – a state selective, which also caters for boarding school pupils – is also facing imminent problems following recent redundancy proposals and staff pay and conditions.

Again, an indicative ballot has been held and staff voted "overwhelmingly" in favour of a possible walkout.

Cranbrook School is renowned for offering facilities akin to that of public schools and is responsible for driving up the prices of houses in its catchment area.

Famous alumni include the likes of astronaut Piers Sellers, sports commentators Barry Davies and Brian Moore, comedian Harry Hill and top TV executive Kevin Lygo.

Incredibly, there is even a third grammar school where union representatives have been approached and a similar ballot set to be held.

KoS has agreed not to reveal the name of the school with discussions at a delicate stage, but can confirm it is another of one of the county's most respected selectivess.

An NUT spokesman said: "It is remarkable. They are all taking these steps, independently, at once."

And at the very heart of the problem, excluding the SLGGS academy row, lies central government funding for sixth forms which is having a knock-on effect across schools.

Dramatically reduced over recent years – some reporting dips of in excess of 30 per cent year-on-year – it is derailing the business plans many grammars have followed for years.

Traditionally, sixth form students have carried a significant premium – thus, by providing vibrant sixth forms, the schools can redistribute cash across the curriculum, thus enhancing its entire offering. And with grammars always proving attractive propositions to students, they have benefitted the most.

But the government has sought to bring schools in line with further education colleges and that has seen budgets pushed to breaking point.

As a result, courses have been cut, staff made redundant as a consequence, and those that remain expected to do even more work in what is already a high pressure environment.

It is that which is now causing teachers to say enough is enough.

The NUT spokesperson added: "The disputes are about redundancies, staff pay and conditions and treatment of staff.

"What we're hearing is that teachers are having to work well above the hours they are contracted for."

Peter Read is an education advisor and former Gravesend head teacher.

He told KoS: "I have never heard of such a situation before.

"I don't think I have ever come across grammar school teachers striking about a particular issue in a particular school before. It is a crisis.

"There is very clear evidence that reductions in sixth form funding are causing serious difficulties across the board, in grammar schools in particular, due to the high proportion of sixth form students they have.



ISSUES: Peter Read, right, says education minister Nicky Morgan, left, needs to release more funds for schools

"Schools haven't got a choice. The government needs to give them more money."

For Cranbrook School, the situation is particularly acute.

It remains the only grammar in Kent which still adheres to the 13-plus – a selective process once popular in the county which saw all students attend non-selectives for the first two years of their secondary education before sitting a test for a grammar spot.

Although it is slowly moving towards the 11-plus, it means it is significantly handicapped by the sixth form funding cuts.

Adds Peter Read: "Because Cranbrook recruits at 13, the proportion of sixth formers it has is a higher proportion – two sevenths at most school, two fifths at Cranbrook.

"As a result, I would go as far as saying it is, inevitably, hit the hardest of any grammar school in the county."

Head teacher John Weeds told KoS: "As a result of ongoing cuts to education funding and increasing costs, in common with many schools, Cranbrook School has had no option but to restructure its staffing.

"This has regrettably resulted in proposed redundancies; a harsh reality of successive budget cuts imposed by government. Staff are understandably finding this a difficult time, and have been in contact with their trade unions. The school is engaged in constructive dialogue with those unions, with assistance from ACAS, with all parties seeking a positive resolution to the dispute."

High flyers such as the Queen Elizabeth's Grammar in Faversham, Ashford's Highworth Grammar School and Maidstone's Oakwood Park Grammar have all recently cut A-level subjects and spoken out against the funding squeeze.

Speaking to KoS last summer, Susanne Staab, head of Ashford's Norton Knatchbull school explained the problem: "We have had restricted budgets since the coalition government's spending review in 2011. Since then we have seen year-on-year decreases in budgets.

"We do see less deprivation, we do see fewer with traditional education special needs, we do see fewer children on free school meals [all of which carry access to additional funding]. So that disadvantages grammar schools to that extent.

"The argument, of course, is that disadvantaged students need more money put into their education. Therefore grammar school students should be achieving more because of the type of student they are. And to some extent you can understand that.

"On the other hand, if you are trying to work with the most able section of the population year-on-year and you are trying to provide the next generation of leaders in all sectors of the economy, then why should they not be appropriately funded?"

A spokesman for the Department of Education said: "Any strike action would have a negative impact on pupils and their learning."

SPECIAL REPORT: GRAMMARS IN CRISIS

LANGTON DELAYS HUGELY CONTROVERSIAL VOTE ON ACADEMY STATUS AMID MOUNTING PRESSURE

A CRUNCH meeting in which governors of a Canterbury grammar school were to vote on plans to become an academy trust has been delayed.

Governors at Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School (SLGGS) in Old Dover Road were due to meet on Wednesday, May 25, following the conclusion of a consultation into hugely controversial plans to become what is known as a multi academy trust.

This would have then allowed it to take over the running of the struggling non-selective Spires Academy in nearby Sturry.

But following an almighty uproar which has seen teachers threaten to strike, pupils stage a walkout and parents becoming increasingly vocal, the meeting to confirm the proposals has now been deferred.

It comes amid mounting pressure on SLGGS' head teacher Jane Robinson, as calls intensify for her – and chairman of governors Dr Ash Rehal – to step down over perceived problems with the academisation process.

She, and Dr Rehal, were summoned to County Hall in Maidstone on Wednesday to discuss the issues.

With SLGGS still currently under local authority control, Kent County Council undertook a review of the procedures – and preliminary findings suggest concerns over votes to push ahead with the plans did not contravene the rules governing it. However, investigations continue.

A spokesman for KCC told us: "KCC can confirm the head teacher, chair of governors and the vice chair of governors attended a meeting at County Hall yesterday with Patrick Leeson, corporate director of education and young people's services, for a detailed discussion on the current position at the Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School.

"It was made clear to the school that the current position is damaging to the school and that a new way forward is needed.

"The outcome of the meeting was positive with the school agreeing to hold a new meeting for parents in early June and confirming that the planned meeting of the governing body on May 25 to vote on, or decide whether to proceed with, the academy proposal, following the outcome of the extended consultation process, would be delayed until after the new parents meeting.



TENSE: Calls continue for SLGGS head Jane Robinson to step down, after KCC leader Paul Carter described the school's current position as 'untenable'

"KCC can also confirm that whilst its investigation into a very specific concern around the votes taken in November 2015 did highlight flaws, the outcome of these votes still stand in line with governance regulations.

"KCC is still seeking legal advice on issues that have been raised by a number of parents, staff, students and governors around the wider decision making process in respect of the academy conversion."

It comes just days after Paul Carter, leader of Kent County Council, entered the debate in an email sent to concerned parents.

In it, he said: "I am extremely concerned by the range of complaints I have received from parents, staff, students and governors about how the proposal has developed and the way the decision was made and consulted on with the wider school community.

"I have already instructed my officers to write to the chair of governors and headteacher to set out our very serious concerns and strongly advise them how, in our view, they must address the current untenable position they find themselves in.

"Rest assured I will not let matters rest until the current situation is addressed and all interested parties are as satisfied as they can be a transparent process has been followed and that the views of parents and local community have been heard and acted upon."

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) has confirmed an 'indicative ballot', gauging support for possible strike action, was overwhelmingly supported. However, a more formal vote would be needed for a walkout to take place.

Campaigners insist the only solution to the crisis facing the school is for both Mrs Robinson and Dr Rehal to stand down, and for the academy process to be stopped.

Richard Davis, a parent and vocal campaigner against the plans, told KoS this week: "They have to go and they have to shelve the plans for academisation.

"They have lost the confidence of staff, parents and pupils. Their positions are untenable."

Efforts to speak to Dominic Herrington, the regional schools commissioner who oversees academies, were rebuffed. He has already given his approval to SLGGS' academy proposals.

However, a Department for Education spokesperson told us: "We are clear about the benefits a multi academy trust can bring by giving school leaders greater influence over the running of the school and driving wider improvement in the system – so children get the best education possible. They will have much better opportunities sharing resources, sharing experiences and skills which will help support improving standards and long-term sustainability.

"SLGGS is following usual process in its application for academy status. The school is currently consulting with the local area and it would be inappropriate to comment further at this point."

Grammar bids to take on Chaucer site in bid to ease city's secondary squeeze

WHILE Simon Langton Girls' finds its academy proposals strongly opposed, Canterbury's only mixed grammar is pushing ahead with ambitious plans to take two new schools under its wing.

Not only has it agreed to bring in the struggling Charles Dickens non-selective in Broadstairs to its multi academy trust, but is also now bidding to open a non-selective free school in Canterbury.

It wants to open it on the site of the Chaucer Technology School, which shut for good last year after falling numbers and financial woes.

KCC mothballed the buildings and recently confirmed it would be revived with a free school in order to cope with secondary school capacity in the city.

Barton Court, which saw a hugely ambitious plan to move lock stock and barrel to the site of the former Herne Bay Golf Club shot down by disapproving parents and which has struggled to get any traction on plans to open a grammar annexe on the same site to serve the coastal communities of the district, sits on a neighbouring plot to the old Chaucer buildings.

KoS understands there are at least two other parties interested in opening a school on the land – among them Canterbury Christ Church University.

In documents revealed to parents this week, the school said: "The Barton Court Academy Trust (BCAT) is preparing a free school bid to open a five form entry mixed secondary school, on our adjacent site. We propose to submit the bid in September 2016 and are seeking views from a wide range of stakeholders from within our school and the wider community.

"Our free school will work together with its partner school Barton Court to provide an outstanding, high quality education in an inclusive and aspirational environment.

"The former Chaucer school is adjacent to Barton Court and we feel this offers an exciting opportunity to open a new provision which from day one will work seamlessly with an outstanding school to ensure its success and popularity."

Views can be expressed on its plans until June 24, with a response document published on July 8.



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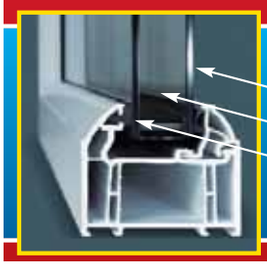
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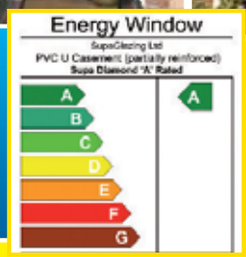
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KOS 2/16

Rolling Stones continue rise from the ashes of catastrophe

Last Saturday, Maidstone United secured a win in the play-off finals to put them one step away from the Football League. It is a remarkable rise up the non-league pyramid for a club who went into bankruptcy a little over 20 years ago...

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

LEICESTER City have not unjustifiably monopolised the headlines in recent weeks, but here in Kent, we witnessed our own mini-miracle last weekend, when Maidstone United defied the odds to secure promotion to the National League.

When the Stones' Lee Worgan denied Danny Kedwell from 12 yards in a thrilling penalty shoot-out against local rivals Ebbsfleet United to seal the win, it represented back-to-back promotions, and another fascinating chapter in the page-turning history of Maidstone United Football Club.

In 1989, the Stones achieved the dream by securing promotion from the Conference – non-league's top division which feeds the Football League – and in doing so became only Kent's second league outfit.

But having sold their Athletic Ground in 1988 in a hugely risky gamble, it would ultimately spark one of the most dramatic demises in football history.

Selling the town centre site for development – MFI now stands there – it splashed £400,000 on a site elsewhere in the borough only for the council to block planning permission.

Forced to share Dartford's Watling Street ground, the club's finances imploded. They even dragged Dartford down with them.

By 1992 it slumped into bankruptcy and became the last club to resign from the league.

For fans, it was the end of an era. But they were not prepared to lie down.

Reformed as Maidstone Invicta in 1993, they simply started all over again in the Kent County League Fourth Division and began the slow but steady progress up the non-league pyramid until now they stand just one step from the Football League once again.

During the 23 years since their initial collapse they were nomadic – sharing grounds with the likes of Sittingbourne and Ashford.

Reborn and now under the ownership of Oliver Ash and Terry Casey – joined by the experience and stewardship of chief executive Bill Williams, United are now tantalisingly close to complete redemption.

Now firmly back in the county town in the Gallagher Stadium, opened in 2012 and boasting a modern and versatile 3G pitch – thousands of fans follow the club each week.

Chief executive Bill Williams told KoS: "We've done extremely well to recover.

"It's a fantastic achievement with a young team and a young manager and next season is a mouthwatering prospect: Tranmere Rovers, Lincoln City, Torquay United, Wrexham – that sounds pretty good, doesn't it?"

Boss Jay Saunders has done quite the job in propelling the Stones back up the football pyramid, and when he steered them into the National League South 12 months ago – the division where the BBC begins publishing results – they were back on the map.

For most teams, the season after moving up a league equals a demand simple in theory: do not get relegated back from where you came.

It quickly became clear that Maidstone were not going to fall through the trap door and instead slowly began to climb their way up the table, ultimately clinching a spot in the play-offs, and in last weekend's final against strong favourites Ebbsfleet United, they demonstrated the kind of fearlessness that inspires the impossible.

Trailing 2-1 in the dying embers of extra time, Maidstone refused to be beaten by their rivals, and grabbed a last gasp equaliser before triumphing on penalties to secure the most unlikely of promotions.

"I'm one of the old school, I've been here a few times, but the excitement never goes away," Mr Williams said.

"The philosophy of any club I've been involved in is that you go into every league wanting to win it.

"If you don't do that everyone picks up on it pretty quickly and you suffer.

"Of course at board level the expectations are slightly different and you might go into the season after being promoted thinking mid-table would be fine.

"You never know what you're going to get in a final – you can play fantastically and lose 2-0, or play terribly and win, but this was like a top drama, and it turned out perfectly for us.

"When the owners took control and asked me to get involved they said they wanted to get us to this level and now we've made it."

For a county the size of Kent, Gillingham being its sole representative in England's top 92 clubs is a surprise, but Maidstone are now just one step away from making the once unimaginable return to the Football League.

However, while Mr Williams admits there have been plenty of board meetings called to discuss strategies to get the club back up, there are immediate challenges to be addressed as a result of their recent success.

To meet National League legislation, the



RETURN: The Gallagher Stadium will host National League football next season

club needs to increase the capacity of its Gallagher Stadium to at least 4,000 by March 31 next year.

The construction of a stand at the Springfield end of the ground will cater for the capacity increase, but Mr Williams explains the scale of the task at hand and his hope of receiving the green light from the local authority this time around.

"There is a lot of work to be done to make sure we are fit for purpose," he said.

"The rules say you have to have your ground ready by March 31, but I'm sure common sense will prevail and we'll be allowed a few extra days if needed.

"The planning application goes into the council in the first week of June, and all the preliminary work is done.

"We made sure we started preparing for such an eventuality three months ago but couldn't put it in until we knew we were going up.

"I'd be very surprised if the council knocked it back, and hopefully within six weeks we will have permission to start building.

"We anticipate the project to take around six months at a cost of about £600,000, but that is not just the cost of the stand that covers a range of other works that need to be done.

"We need the number of turnstiles to go up from six to eight, a couple more exit gates, additional walkways, food and drink facilities - there'll be a lot going on."

Mr Williams is confident the majority of the money needed will come from the pockets of the club's directors, but admits attention may turn to the supporters.

Maidstone this week announced its match-day prices for next season, with adult on-the-day admission up to £15 from £12 last season, and a hike in the price of a main stand season ticket from £265 to £355.

"The owners are very good businessmen and have always found the money when we need that little bit extra," said the chief executive.

"We will look at them and then look to our supporters and say 'could you consider supporting us by buying a season ticket?'.

"If we sell 2,000 of them the job is done and we'll have the money to cover the costs.

"The stadium currently holds 3,030 but while the building is going on, that will be reduced to around 2,500, so we'll have 500 disappointed fans.

"That's why we're encouraging them to buy a season ticket and make sure they don't miss out, but we're not holding them to ransom, they're competitive prices and I think we'll get some big gates next season."



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May update from your Independent MEP for South East

Janice Atkinson

The Europe of Nations and Freedom Group on TTIP
My group held a press conference during the last Strasbourg plenary session. We pointed out that TTIP is undemocratic, negotiated in secrecy by the EU commission, and detrimental to our countries. A one-size-fits-all approach for 28 states will not work.

I made clear that we do not want lobbyists, big pharma companies and unelected EU bureaucrats, to decide the future of our NHS. I revealed that even if we vote Brexit after TTIP is signed, then we are still liable to all clauses, including the ability of corporates to sue governments outside of the national court process.

Restoring a fully functioning Schengen system
I mentioned in my plenary speech that I do not know why we are even discussing Schengen. It is clearly a failed project and it puts our security at risk.

The problems we have because of the illegal migration camps in Calais are caused by Schengen´s open borders. It allows migrants to move through Europe unchecked. The French authorities have even given them safe passage via trains to Calais.

The Dublin Agreement, whereby asylum is claimed in the first country in the EU where migrants arrive, is being dumped, not because it did not work, but because states have turned a blind eye.

Sensible governments in Eastern Europe are putting up borders, quite to the displeasure of many left wing politicians in the European Parliament, who still live in their fairy tale world of open borders.

I wonder however, how many have visited the Calais jungle, as I did. I spoke to the people on the ground, the refugees and aid workers. It made very clear that the large majority of these people are economic migrants, not refugees. If only some in the EU parliament would also open their eyes and do some fact finding. But they won't, as they prefer the comfort of their offices and their political correct slant.

Common European Asylum System reform
The EU for some time is planning on putting into place a European Asylum System, which the Parliament discussed. Earlier this year the Council and Commission decided to push through migration quotas. After Merkel´s invitation to migrants to come to Europe, other states are now obliged to take migrants into their countries, the numbers being determined by the EU.

Eastern European countries of the Visegrad group rightly reject the forced redistribution of migrants. But that does not discourage the EU Commission to push through, as it even plans to fine countries 250,000 Euros per migrant that they refuse.

Hungary´s Prime minister, Orbán, plans to organize a referendum later this year, asking the people whether they agree with the EU´s quota system. Unsurprisingly, the unelected European Commission declared that Hungary's vote on migrant quotas would be ignored.

China´s market economy status
Thanks to my group, the Europe of Nations and Freedom, we had a discussion in the EU parliament on granting China market economy status. As a matter of fact, China is not a market economy. Opening up our countries, would expose our industries to illegal dumping of goods, in particularly steel. Wooing a Communist country with appalling human rights is unacceptable.

Janice

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Full details of the event can be found at www.bromleypageant.co.uk.





STAR: Derek Bell MBE, above left, will be meeting visitors (pic: Lee Mortlock Photographics), while there's also a chance to win a restored classic Mini

All you have to do is answer the simple question below.

Q. Which former Daytona and Le Mans winner will be attending the Bromley Pageant of Motoring?

***A**. Derek Bell MBE*
***B**. Jeremy Clarkson*
***C**. Mr Bean*

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County 'wins' if you vote to stay in the EU, says Lib Dem leader

Writing exclusively for Kent on Sunday, **Tim Farron MP**, leader of the Liberal Democrats, explains why he believes the EU vote is so essential for the people of Kent and why we should vote to remain.



STAY: Tim Farron, inset, says that it is in Kent's best interests for us to vote to remain within the European Union on June 23

THE Garden of England has always been our gateway to Europe. From smugglers on Romney Marsh during the Napoleonic wars to lorries stacked on the M20 carrying our exports to the Continent, I am well aware that Kent feels it on the front line.

And this presents Kent with challenges as well as opportunities. The ease with which you can zip over to France to stock up on wine is balanced by the chaos that can ensue from a French dock strike.

But voting to leave Europe will not magic away these challenges, and will make others far worse. 'Getting our borders back' could mean moving the tensions of Sangatte to Folkestone.

But I want to move on from the negative mud-slinging by giving you some facts showing how Kent benefits from EU membership.

Firstly, peace.

You know better than anyone how vulnerable Britain was to invasion. Those narrow threads of barbed wire defending Britain from the monstrous Nazi machine lined the beaches of Kent. The Battle of Britain was fought over the skies of Kent as well as London. It was the EU binding former enemies together which brought peace, and later helped bring about the end of the Cold War, as Eastern European countries clamoured to join the prosperous, peaceful EU club.

I'm a father as well as a politician and my greatest priority is to ensure that the next generation don't fight in wars that tore apart lives of the previous generation.

Then there are jobs: 450,000 in the south east are linked to trade with Europe. That is one in ten. I don't claim all those would vanish overnight if we left. But £19 billion of goods from the south east were sold to the EU last year, half of all exports. Four of the south east's five top trading partners are from the EU.

Lord Lawson, former Conservative chancellor, blithely admits that if we leave, British exporters might have to pay four per cent duty on everything we sell to European neighbours.

Already investment is down due to uncertainty over whether Britain will retain access to the world's most lucrative market. Even a small increase in duty will hit jobs. As we emerge from one of the most punishing recessions in memory, I want to protect them.

Take Hush Heath. It is a vineyard in Staplehurst selling sparkling wine to the continent. It's like coals to Newcastle, but probably tastier. Its owner Richard Balfour-Lynn has told the Liberal Democrats he is worried about his exports – and the inevitable consequence for his staffing levels – if we spend two years with our begging bowl asking Europe to give us a trade deal.

And whilst I'm more of a Kentish beer man, Champagne house Taittinger is to produce wine in Chilham to export round the world; an example of Kent adapting and flourishing in a global world.

Or take the MJ Machinery Group in Ashford. It is pro-remain because the £34m business exports up to a third of its machinery to countries such as Germany, Belgium and Sweden.

Managing director Tim Allen warns that leaving would deter investment, threaten jobs and endanger the economy: "We could end up having to pay tariffs and fill out extra paperwork. That could put my sales and my employees at risk."

The Brexiteers have variously suggested we could have a relationship with the EU like that of Norway, Canada or even Albania. It is back of a fag packet stuff, and this for the most important decision of our lifetimes.

We hear about what we put into the EU; less about what we get out. Kent received £30m of EU funding from 2007-2013 to boost apprenticeships, support small businesses and improve infrastructure.

But this debate shouldn't just be about money, crucial though that is. Take the environment. EU nature laws protect some of Kent's most beautiful landscapes and best loved species. These include the Medway Estuary and marshes, Thanet coast and the RSPB nature reserve in Dungeness.

EU standards have massively improved water quality. Beaches such as Margate Bay, Ramsgate Western Undercliffe and Sandwich Bay were all ranked poor in the 1990s yet are now safe to swim in.

And then there is security. Since 2010 Kent police have extradited 251 suspected criminals using the European arrest warrant, making our streets safer; 23 of Kent's most wanted criminals have been caught in Europe and brought back to face justice thanks to EU police cooperation.

But finally, let us consider what kind of country our children be living in when they grow.

This decision is less about the here and now, more about the legacy we leave coming generations.

And it's about the character of our country. Do you see Britain as standing apart from others, with 'Europe' essentially being something that is done to us? Or do you see Britain as an outward-looking country that works with its neighbours, punching above its weight and building a more prosperous, secure world?

Do you think we can only protect ourselves from distant threats by standing alone? Or will we be safer working with friendly countries, who share both the same threats and the same values?

I'm an optimist: Liberals are natural optimists. Earlier this month, as the biggest gainers in the local elections, including in areas such as Maidstone, my optimism was vindicated.

We want to look forward, not back. We are in the future business.

Not everyone gets it though. Roger Daltrey has come out for Brexit. He had his reasons, I'm not going to slag him off. In the 1960s he led the youthful mod revolution. He's 72, a slip of a lad. But Roger, we're not talking about your generation. We're not talking about mine. The referendum is about generations to come.

Do you see Britain as a country that should resist any changes to meet challenges of the 21st century? Or as an adaptable country that can thrive, innovate and lead in an open, global economy?

Kent wins in Europe. That is why we need to stay 'In'.

Your path to clarity on the EU debate

Professor Richard G Whitman from the University of Kent looks at how you can seek to cut through the hyperbole and find clear answers to issues on the EU referendum...



EXPERT: Professor Whitman

THERE is now just over a month to the referendum on whether the UK will remain or leave the European Union (EU).

The public vote on June 23 is one of the most important political decisions that we will make in our lives.

The 'poll of polls' that combines the results of more than 100 separate opinion polls show the result being too close to call at the moment.

Neither the 'remain' or the 'leave' campaigns have established a clear lead. The opinion polls also show a large number of people still haven't made their mind up on how they will vote.

The EU referendum is not like a normal election where we are voting for a party or to elect an individual. We will be voting on a single issue – do we want to remain part of a group of 28 European countries or do we want the UK to leave the EU club?

Whatever decision we make as voters will have a major effect on the future of our economy, our society and Britain's place in the world for decades to come. So having a say, by voting in the referendum, is crucially important.

Television, radio and newspapers are full of coverage of the referendum campaign. But they are tending to focus more on the politicians and the campaigns, such as the antics of Boris Johnson or whether prime minister David Cameron is trying to scare the public into voting to leave.

How can we, as voters, get the best understanding of the issues and make our decision on how we will vote?

Most importantly if you want to have a vote in the referendum then you need to be on the electoral register. If you are not sure if you are registered to vote then you need to go online and complete the form at www.eureferendum.gov.uk/register-to-vote – but you need to be quick as the deadline to register to vote for the referendum is June 7.

If you are an undecided as to which way to vote then go and have a look at what the two official campaigns organisations want you to think about when coming to a decision.

Britain Stronger in Europe are making the argument for the UK to remain a member of the EU. Vote Leave is the campaign organisation arguing for a leave the EU vote. Both organisations have websites, will be allowed time for short campaign films on the main TV channels and will be leafleting you in the next few weeks.

If you want to check whether the campaigns are giving you the real facts then you can use one of the independent 'fact checkers' websites that are trying to separate the myths from the truth.

The BBC's Reality Check website, Full fact (fullfact.org) and the UK in a Changing Europe (www.ukandeu.ac.uk) are all checking the claims the campaigns are making and seeking to provide impartial analysis to voters.

And if you still have questions you can attend one of the Ask the Expert events that are taking place across the country and where impartial experts are available to provide answers.

The next one in Kent takes place in Canterbury on Tuesday, May 31. They are free to attend but you need to register online at AskTheExperts-ukandeu.eventbrite.com.

■ Professor Richard G Whitman is professor of politics at the University of Kent and senior fellow on the independent UK in a Changing Europe initiative.

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Dover town centre's £53m boost

Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

A RETAIL and leisure project earmarked for the heart of Dover town centre has received a cash boost of over £53 million.

Legal and General Property (LGP) has announced on behalf of its Managed Property Fund a £53.25m investment to acquire and fund the development of the St James scheme.

Developer Bond City has been involved with the scheme for more than a decade, which once completed - due by autumn 2017 - will provide 156,915 sq ft of modern retail and leisure accommodation.

The retail element is to be anchored by major brands including Marks & Spencer and Next, whilst the leisure component includes a six-screen Cineworld cinema, a 108-room Travelodge hotel and six restaurants.

The scheme is currently 69 per cent pre-let with a further three per cent under offer and work has already begun on site with completion due by autumn 2017.

The development of St James is part of Dover District Council's wider commitment to regenerating the town and fits with its growth agenda to ensure the town has the appropriate retail and leisure provision to support its growing population.



REGENERATION: The £53m St James scheme includes retail and leisure and is planned to open by autumn 2017

The council is working with developers to bring more than 10,000 new homes to the district by 2026, increasing to 14,000 new homes in the longer term.

Moreover, there is significant investment being directed towards the local infrastructure, including the Port of Dover's Western Docks Revival project and the Traffic Management Improvement scheme at the Eastern Docks Ferry Terminal.

Mark Russell, senior fund manager at LGP, said: "Already significantly pre-let, St James, Dover will provide access to a diverse and resilient income stream derived from high quality tenants that are relevant to the intended market.

"Rents are affordable and will allow for profitable trading – important as we enter a phase in the market cycle where income and income growth is expected to form the greater part of total returns.

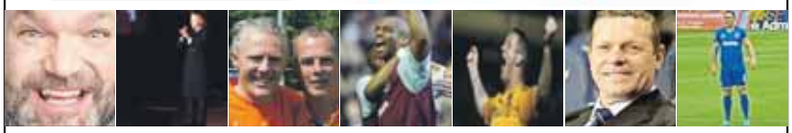
"The scheme will be modern, fit for purpose and highly prominent and we have already received significant tenant demand for the remaining vacant units."

Council leader Paul Watkins said: "This is a major vote of confidence in Dover from one of the UK's leading investors who have clearly recognised the enormous potential of the St James, Dover development. We look forward to working with Legal & General to transform the retail and leisure offer in the town centre. These are exciting times for Dover."

Clive Lynton, development director at Bond City, said: "We are delighted to be working with Legal & General who have a strong track record in financing and operating major retail and leisure schemes across the UK.

"Our pre-construction plans are well advanced, and we will be making a series of announcements in the coming weeks about the construction phases and new tenants."

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Security chief admits 'bomb' blunder at Old Trafford

But focus now has been switched to why Manchester United officials did not find suspicious package until just before last Sunday's big match...

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

THE focus of the security scare that forced thousands of fans to be evacuated from Manchester United's Old Trafford was swiftly switched to Kent within 24 hours, after the firm which left the dummy device in the stadium was identified.

And the head of the company was quick to put his hands up and take full responsibility for the blunder which forced the match – the final Premier League fixture for United and Bournemouth - to be rescheduled for Tuesday.

A major security alert was triggered after a package, described by police at the time as an "incredibly lifelife explosive device" was found in a toilet.

It quickly transpired it had, in fact, been left behind following a training exercise last week.

That had been organised by a firm called Security Search Management & Solutions Ltd which is based in Biggin Hill.



Chris Reid, its managing director, found himself the centre of media attention on Monday afternoon and came clean on his involvement in the fiasco in a refreshingly frank statement.



An emotional Mr Reid – a retired Scotland Yard police officer – said: "This mistake is entirely mine. I have to take full responsibility for leaving a training item behind on [the previous] Wednesday."

Mr Reid said the device had been left on a hook behind a door of a men's toilet cubicle and "was not concealed in any other way".

He added: "I am absolutely devastated that a lapse in my working protocols has resulted in many people being disappointed, frightened and inconvenienced. Nothing I can say will rectify that."

Security Search Management & Solutions Ltd was hired by Deacons Canines to carry out practical train-







SCARE: Chris Reid, left, with a device similar to that which that caused Manchester United's final Premier League game against Bournemouth to be abandoned. Tuesday night's replay saw the Red Devils triumph 3-1. Pictures: PA

ing exercises at the stadium last week.

Mr Reid told reporters that after the exercise for five dog handlers he had checked a number of fake items into his bag, having previously recorded their position on a "trapping sheet".

He said: "Unfortunately, an item that was placed in the male WC was not recovered, as I had a similar item that I had not used. I saw this and made the mistake in thinking that the item in the WC had been brought back when found by the attendees as had other items I had checked into the bag.

"This item concerned was a mock-up of a pipe bomb, it was approximately eight inches long, brass fittings at each end, a length of black flexible lead and a mobile phone taped to the pipe with black tape.

"The item had a small white label on it which said: 'training aid if found contact SSMS and my telephone number'."

He said he had been at home when events unfolded and watched it on television. The evacuation of the Stretford End and Sir Alex Ferguson Stand began around 20 minutes before the scheduled kick-off of 3pm after an announcement was made for security personnel to invoke "operation red code".

The device was discovered in toilets in the quadrant between the two stands. Shortly after 3.15pm those remaining in the stadium were informed the game was off.

Army bomb disposal experts called in by officers carried out a controlled explosion on the device in the north-west quadrant of the ground at 4.30pm.

The game was called off after discussions between the Football Association, the Premier League and police and has been rearranged for Tuesday at 8pm, four days before United played Crystal Palace at Wembley in the FA Cup final on Saturday.

Asked it if had been a "blunder", Mr Reid said: "I wouldn't say blunder. It's very difficult to say that, it's easy to say that and people will say 'yes it was'.

"However, there was something found and they dealt with it in the way they should have done, whether it should have been found sooner is completely another issue.

"It would be obvious to say yes they should have found it. But I don't know – the rooms may have been locked after I left, without being checked, and why should they be?"

Manchester's police and crime commissioner Tony Lloyd said that the Red Devils needed to be "up front" with answers about the "shambolic" security scare at Old Trafford.

Mr Lloyd, who is also the mayor of Greater Manchester, said the club's reputation and public safety had come under scrutiny after Sunday's evacuation.

He said it was "astonishing" that the dummy bomb was not found earlier and the alarm raised only 20 minutes before kick-off, with thousands of fans already in the ground.

Mr Lloyd, who has called for an inquiry, said United needed to provide some answers.

He said: "I think United have to come up front with all this because in the end it's their reputation, but it's also public safety and both those two really do matter.

"I think United have got to begin to put answers forward and I look forward to hearing what they have to say as soon as possible.

"Fiasco is the right word. It was shambolic.

"It was the fact that the security had missed something that in the end ought to have been found."

Manchester United executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward said because the device was non-explosive it could not have been detected by sniffer dogs during their routine sweep of the ground.

Mr Woodward had praised stadium staff for the way they reacted to the incident.

He said in a statement: "The safety of the fans is our number one aim at every event we host at Old Trafford. Overall, I'm proud of how our staff responded."

United announced all fans who bought a ticket for Sunday's abandoned game received a refund and free entry to Tuesday's game, while Bournemouth put on free coach travel for their supporters.

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EXERCISE: "It allowed us to test the response skills and tenacity of our firefighters to resolve and contain the situation safely, quickly and effectively," said crew manager Rob Parkin

C ln h p k crews to learn valuable skills

Northfleet supermarket hosts Kent Fire and Rescue Service's realistic, three-hour training drill about hazardous vapours being released into the air – reporter **Luke May** finds out more...







TRAINING: The KFRS exercise took place in a special area of supermarket chain Lidl's distribution centre in Crete Hall Road and featured some 20 of the county's firefighters

EMERGENCY crews wearing full protective gear tackled a major chemical leak on Wednesday... but only as part of an elaborate and realistic training drill.

Around 20 firefighters from Kent Fire and Rescue Service were involved in the exercise in Northfleet, near Gravesend - as our dramatic photographs reveal.

The aim was to test how they would respond to a chemical leak. It was staged in a special area of discount supermarket chain Lidl's distribution centre in Crete Hall Road.

There had been plans to use the latest drone technology to assist with the exercise, but bad weather forced that to be scrapped.

However, it was still hailed a great success.

Rob Parkin, crew manager, organised the exercise.

He explained: "Whilst incidents of this nature are rare, we are extremely grateful to Lidl for providing this realistic training opportunity.

"It allowed us to test the response skills and tenacity of our firefighters to resolve and contain the situation safely, quickly and effectively."

He explained how the day was planned: "The scenario unfolds after the alarm is raised following a malfunction in the Northfleet cold storage facility, resulting in hazardous vapours being released.

"This would trigger the site's emergency response plan to be implemented, which includes evacuating the building of staff.

"However, after the roll call it becomes clear that a member of staff is unaccounted for."

Firefighters dressed in regular breathing apparatus snatched the 'casualty' taking them back outside, before firefighters dressed in specialist chemical protection suits were sent in to identify the chemical leak.

The three-hour exercise saw firefighters practice blocking drains and setting up an exclusion zones, to prevent a chemical contaminating the water supply.

Stacy Copley, head of logistics at Lidl, said the exercise was also an opportunity to test the sites emergency response plans.

She said: "Carrying out this training exercise with KFRS is a valuable experience in preparing us to implement the plan in the unlikely event of an incident occurring."

KFRS group manager Leanne McMahon added: "The exercise provided us with the ideal realistic training opportunity to test how our crews would respond to a chemical leak at a site such as this.

"Fortunately incidents of this nature are rare and we were pleased with how the fire crews and Lidl staff worked together, implementing the full emergency plan smoothly and efficiently. It's always good to work with local businesses so that we are ready to react in the unlikely event that something of this nature does happen in the county.

"We are very grateful to Lidl for allowing it to happen."

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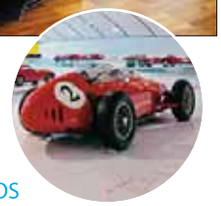
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Railways of The Rhine

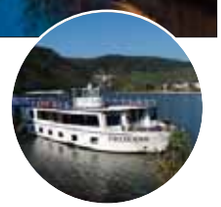
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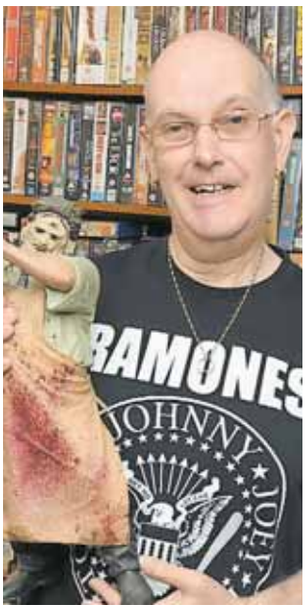
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SURROUNDED: Teynham's Mark Gambell has a huge collection of video nasties – along with more regular movies – filling up two rooms in his house

Meet the man with a penchant for blood and gore video nasties

Chris Murphy speaks to Mark Gambell about how a trip to the cinema in the 1970s to see a classic movie would spark a bizarre fascination with pre-certification videos from more than 30 years ago

WHEN Mark Gambell went to see the classic movie Jaws, he can have little idea it would spark something many would consider rather dark inside him.

Because that fateful trip back in the 1970s would, just like the Great White Shark it depicted, give him a bizarre taste for celluloid blood that would lead to him today compiling one of the UK's biggest collections of banned videos; often referred to as video nasties.

Now with over 2,000 titles crammed into two bedrooms at his Kent home, he is looking for even more.

He collects what is known as pre-certification videos – VHS tapes released into the home market before the introduction of the 1984 video recordings act (see box off).

Born from the extraordinary success in the 1980s of the widespread take-up of home video, which suddenly allowed users to rent or buy movies for the first time just months after they had disappeared off the big screen, those who liked their horror movies with lashings of gore started showing interest.

While the likes of film studio Hammer's Dracula, Frankenstein and The Mummy sated the desires of horror fans in the earlier days of the film industry, tastes had become more graphic.

And so the video nasty was born.

Suddenly, this new way of watching a film, in the comfort of your own home away from maddening crowds, exploded on to the scene.

But as the market boomed, it created a legal nightmare for governments.

Long before the world wide web served up every known kink known to mankind, the film studios realised no one was governing output on video.

At the time, Europe had little censorship. So the studios targeted the UK, and within a year or so, video shop shelves were rammed full of films that were able to circumvent the board of censors.

There was outrage at the output. Titles like I Spit on Your Grave, Driller Killer, and Cannibal Holocaust shocked law makers in Britain and they realised the loophole needed to be sealed. There was public revulsion.

Videos were new, and no one had considered censoring their content until they arrived in their millions.

For a short period, video fans could buy and rent just about anything until parliament caught up with the technology.

Public awareness of the availability of these videos began in early 1982, when Vipco (Video Instant Picture Company), the UK distributors of notorious 1979 splatter fest, The Driller Killer, took out full-page advertisements in a number of specialist video magazines, depicting the video's explicit cover; an action which resulted in a large number of complaints to the Advertising Standards Agency.

A few months later Go Video, the distributors of the already-controversial 1980 Italian film Cannibal Holocaust, in an effort to boost publicity and generate sales that ultimately backfired, wrote anonymously to famed campaigned for decency Mary Whitehouse of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association complaining about their own film.

Mrs Whitehouse sparked a public campaign and coined the term 'video nasty'.

The media quickly jumped on the bandwagon and campaigns to ban such releases gathered steam.

The video nasties were finally outlawed and pulled from shelves when the video recordings act 1984 came into force on September 1, 1985.

Those that had bought them were suddenly in possession of somewhat dubious collectors' items.

And Mr Gambell, 55, is one of those collectors today.

Surrounded by his blood-curdling library, the part-time gardener from Teynham, between Faversham and Sittingbourne, told us: "After I saw Jaws with my dad, I became really interested in film.

"I enjoy horror movies and have a lot of the so-called video nasties from the early years. They really have become hard to find collectors' items, and I use eBay and boots fairs to keep adding to my collection. I will sell them occasionally, but not often.

"Some titles are going for upwards of £100. I enjoy them, but do have other titles in my collection, for instance Paint Your Wagon, because I like musicals as well."

Together with his partner Sas, he is keen to keep the collection going.

He said: "We are both avid movie buffs and enjoy tracking down particularly rare, deleted, hard to find titles.

"Our collection is mainly pre certificate but finding more is getting progressively more difficult."

And it could get even more difficult for Mr Gambell as there is doubt about the legal position in some of these titles being traded.

A spokesman for the British Board of Film Classification said: "It is not really illegal to own these videos, and many of them have over the years been submitted for classification.

"But we believe Trading Standards, the enforcement authority for this matter, may take a dim view of they are being traded for money.

"Every video recording being exchanged for money does need an official classification."

The CPS in Kent told us: "The supply of such material would be an offence, although ownership, provided an individual does not intend to supply the material, is not an offence."

FROM PRE-CERTIFICATION TO TODAY'S RELEASES

FILM certification has been a topic of debate for decades and is now being played out again in the world of video games as that industry explodes into one of mass entertainment's biggest revenue generators.

In short, a pre-certification video is one issued in the UK before the introduction of the 1984 video recordings act, as outlined in the main article.

Prior to this, while most studios and firms simply issued onto tape the same content already certified for cinema release to ensure there was no problem, some smaller independent companies saw the initial lack of regulation as an opportunity.

They released uncensored films depicting scenes we would not expect to see today but safe in the knowledge a little infamy around a title does little to damage sales.

Courtesy of Mary Whitehouse's coining of the phrase 'video nasty' the director of public prosecutions drew up a list of videos they deemed obscene.

The consequence, as the law came into force, was that those who liked their film content a little more shocking, were left having to find ways to trade their now illegal tapes.

As with all things restricted, a thriving collectors' market emerged and today, those videos deemed to be 'pre-cert' have developed collectible status.

It is thought some of the most in-demand tapes have changed hands for in excess of £500.

Today, with very few specialist exceptions,

In general, every video, DVD, Blu-Ray or digital release today comes complete with an age rating from the British Board of Film Certification.

From U representing a movie with 'universal' appeal, through to PG (parental guidance), PG13, 15 and 18, the rating continues to act as a vital reference for those choosing a movie to watch.

Today, most films also highlight the sort of content which may offend viewers, such as violence, scenes of a sexual nature, or bad language.

It's all a very long way from pre-1985.

Action and tyre-smoke guaranteed at rallycross

With cars boasting 600bhp, World Rallycross returns to its birthplace in the county this month as Lydden Hill plays host to the UK's only championship round – **Tom Pyman** reports...



HOME: Rallycross was designed for TV - world champion Petter Solberg celebrates at Lydden Hill last year...

NEXT weekend will see thousands of race fans flock to Lydden Hill race circuit between Canterbury and Dover for two days of breathless action.

The World Rallycross (RX) of Great Britain returns for its now trademark spring bank holiday weekend slot of May 28 and 29, in the only event where the high-octane championship will go wheel-to-wheel on UK shores this year.

And it is expected up to 15,000 will fill the venue to watch the fast-paced action which was created to deliver quick, bite-sized races which would appeal to TV audiences.

Rallycross was invented by Robert Reed, who was the producer on ITV's World of Sport programme at the time, and has its roots at the race track in Wootton.

The first event took place at Lydden Hill on February 4 in 1967, where it quickly became a staple of Saturday afternoon sports in the UK with both ITV and BBC broadcasting the sport.

The popularity of rallycross soon spread, with the first event on the European mainland taking place in Holland in 1969, with the Scandinavian rallycross debut taking place in Sweden two years later.

John Close, spokesman for World RX Great Britain, told KoS why the sport is so special and why it seems to continue to grown in popularity year-on-year.

"Rallycross is a product made for TV – it's short, sharp racing that everyone can enjoy," he said.

"Races last about three and a half minutes compared with two hours in F1, for example, and that was the ethos behind it, really.

"Its big appeal is the fact you can buy a ticket and take anyone – regardless of whether they're massively into their motorsport or not – and they'll come away having had a good time.

"The final is a bit longer but still lasts under six minutes but it's so action-packed. I don't believe there's another motorsport that delivers so much and it appears to be growing year-on-year.

"Cars will have tyres smoking or their bumpers hanging off but they'll just keep racing."

Rallycross drivers get behind the wheel of supercars packing more than 600bhp and the ability to accelerate from 0-60mph in less than two seconds – faster than an F1 car.

Race meetings include four action-packed qualifying heats with the most successful drivers progressing through to semi-finals and a final.

This year represents the third year of the world championships, which have proved a hit in Kent and beyond.

With its roots firmly cemented in the county, drivers returning to Lydden Hill see it as a big deal, as last year's winner and current defending world champion Petter Solberg explains.

"It's always a fantastic weekend to go racing at Lydden Hill," he said.

"The atmosphere and the crowds are very special, and of course, we are going there this year to fight hard and win like we did last season.

"Rallycross at Lydden is a massive part of the sport and everyone wants to win there, it will be an exciting weekend for sure."

Mr Close agrees that Kent's connection is obvious: "It's really nice because it's where the sport first started and it still continues to take place here and draw big crowds.

"Lydden Hill is a special venue, and while we're expecting up to as many as 15,000 next weekend, it still maintains its small, intimate charm that makes it unique.

"You can stand or sit anywhere, bring your family and your dog, and see everything that goes on on the track – it's not like in F1 where you just wait to see cars go past the same corner.

"The access you have to the pits and things like that is great, too.

"It's difficult to operate in terms of noise and restrictions and so there aren't many venues around, but we're lucky in Kent to have both Lydden Hill and Brands Hatch on our doorstep.



"There are only five sports in the whole world recognised by the FIA so to have them come to Kent so frequently and to such positive reviews is fantastic."

If Solberg is to repeat his dominant performance from last season's World RX of GB, though, he will have to be on top form.

A full complement of factory-backed entries will be revving up to take the spoils away from him – including nine time World Rally champion Sébastien Loeb, double DTM champion Mattias Ekström, 2014 winner Andreas Bakkerud and Ford Performance Racing's Ken Block.

Not to mention X Games winner and Kent local Liam Doran, as well as 2015 vice champion Timmy Hansen.

Liam Doran will be particularly popular – his father, legendary racer Pat Doran, owns the Lydden Hill circuit.

In addition to that, Lydden Hill is offering a full support programme of junior categories to keep the on-track action buzzing, as well as jaw-dropping demonstrations of stunt driving and retro rallycross machinery.

■ Further information, including tickets to the World RX of GB are available at www.lyddenhill.co.uk/tickets.





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Great War expert rides from War Horse to recreating the trenches

Chris Murphy speaks to a military historian from Faversham who was a consultant on the War Horse movie and is now spearheading a fascinating series of tunnels recreating life on the Western Front...

FOR so many, the horrors of the First World War are epitomised by life in the trenches.

The deep grooves dug into the battlefields were the frontline in the push across northern Europe for territory.

Millions, however, would die in them or as they emerged 'over the top' in a desperate bid to make ground in the battle for supremacy.

And now a history buff in Faversham, who worked on the acclaimed Steven Spielberg movie War Horse, is aiming to recreate just what life was like for the soldiers by creating his own maze of trenches.

He hopes that once complete, it can become a useful education resource for children to visit to get a very real sense of the conditions experience 100 years ago.

Military historian Andy Robertshaw told us: "I am building a replica of a trench system that was called Hill 60."

Hill 60 was the scene of a number of infamous battles during the conflict which cost thousands of lives, just south of Ypres in Belgium, on the Western Front.

Mr Robertshaw added: "I would like to see it being used by schools, colleges and the media so everyone can understand what these men went through. It is at a site near Lewes in East Sussex."

Four years ago, when he lived in Surrey, he dug a First World War trench in the garden of his home.

Previous curator of the Royal Logisitc Corps Museum and head of education at the National Army Museum, he is one of the leading experts on the Great War.

A fact underlined by being employed as a consultant for the screenplay of War Horse, penned by Richard Curtis based on the original novel by Michael Morpurgo, who, coincidentally, attended school in Canterbury and worked in the county prior to his success.

In addition to helping with the script, he trained the extras, worked with the costume and props department, and was on set every day, working alongside director Steven Spielberg.

He even featured in the movie as a uniformed character, blowing the whistle for the 'over the top' sequence.

On the small screen, he's also worked on Channel 4's popular Time Team programme. It is his work in film and TV which is financing the work on the trenches.

He explained to KoS about his latest project: "The intention of this project is recreate in detail the living conditions of men serving on the Western Front 100 years ago.

"Although it is possible to visit sites in Belgium and France associated with the war, these battlefield tours are dominated by pilgrimage to the cemeteries and memorials that are to be found along the front.

"These, of course, are how we remember the war and while very commendable, they won't actually represent the experience of the serving soldier.

"In a few places visitors can walk through trenches of a sort.

"However those at Vimy Ridge are concrete replicas and the system of trenches at Sanctuary Wood, Hill 62, are muddy and run down. We do not represent the trenches as used during the war, in my opinion.

"With no sand bags for cover, lacking timber trench boards or signs of habitation they are enjoyable for school groups to walk through in wellies but not to gain a full understanding of the real conditions.

"With these features in mind, the Hill 60 trench system will incorporate dug outs, latrines, cooking areas, front line and communication trenches, no-man's land and even a light railway of the type used in the war."

He said he is determined to cover every aspect of the horrors of war.

Mr Robertshaw said: "The system will be based on the original Hill 60 near Ypres which was fought over from 1914 to the end of the war – effectively, the entire duration of hostilities.

"A visit to the system will explain in three dimensions what the trenches looked like and how men lived rather than died."

He is now organising a series of conferences and film showings and will be on the Somme, to mark the 100th anniversary of one of the war's most horrific battles, for July 1.

He realises the importance of the men who fought, and wants to reach out to anyone who can identify some in a photo - pictured above.

■ Andrew Robertshaw gives a talk at Whitstable's Horsebridge Centre, Making War Horse The Movie, at 7.30pm on May 27. For details : www.horsebridge-centre.org.uk.





RECREATED: The Lewes trenches should be ready for visitors this summer. Meanwhile, the historian is keen to identify the men in the original photographs below. If you can help email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.





REALITY OF LIFE ON THE FRONTLINE

WHILE millions were killed during the brutal and bloody First World War, one fact seldom heard is that 90 per cent of the men who went into a trench survived.

Large scale attacks on those living in the trenches were fairly rare, but of course these caused devastating losses totalling thousands at a time.

Many mown down by machine gun fire as they surged 'over the top' in a bid to topple control of trenches often just yards in front of them.

In addition, there was the horror of the use of poisoned gas – deployed by both sides – which could cause horrendous suffering.

The first day of the Battle of Somme, on July 1, 1916, remains the bloodiest day in the British Army's history. It suffered some 57,500 casualties, 19,200 of which were killed. In total, the battle, which raged until November, is thought to have seen more than one million casualties.

So just what was life actually like in the trenches?

Standard early morning attacks could often comprise of standing on a 'fire step' and shooting at the enemy from within the trenches. These were called 'morning hate'. And it was all repeated in the evening.

Because there were so many men available and life at the front so mentally draining, troops on both sides were rotated regularly which also boosted morale.

Charles Carrington of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment's 1/5th Territorial Battalion, did some calculations at the time on how often a soldier would be in danger during a normal service during the conflict.

He worked out that his section of the front could be held by just 10 per cent of his platoon's troops. So the bulk of a soldier's time was divided between a range of specialist areas behind the front line, all of which was made safer by the ingenious design of the trench system itself.

There were even teams of miners who would dig beneath the trenches in order to reach the enemy lines and detonate bombs beneath them.

It was discovered men were in the firing line just 15 per cent of the time, with 10 per cent spent in a support trench, still dangerous, but not as much.

Some 30 per cent of the time they were in a reserve trench and 45 per cent away from the front line completely.

Yet the impact on those who served in the trenches could last a lifetime and many struggled to settle back into normal life when they eventually returned home.

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Dr Pieter Claassen of Hanover House, a local dental clinic is experiencing high demand for dental implants due to an advanced technique called PRGF which they offer to patients that are having dental implants.

This new system encourages healing at an accelerated rate which means patients are able to go about their normal, everyday life without any or very little down-time.

Patients travel from all over, demanding this unique treatment which is also being used to help sportsmen and women speed up the healing process following injury. PRGF stands for Plasma Rich Growth Factors, – referred to as accelerated healing by the Hanover House dental implant team.

The Problem

If you are one of the thousands of people suffering from missing or painful teeth you do not need to be reminded that it is very likely you will experience any or all of the following problems.

- Not being able to eat what you want
- Having to use fixative several times a day which is difficult to remove from your denture
- Your confidence has dropped
- You don't enjoy food anymore because of the denture covering the roof of your mouth
- You find yourself talking with your hand in front of your mouth to either stop a loose denture from moving or to hide an embarrassing gap
- When did you last smile?
- You have bone loss where the denture is pressing on underlying bone
- You can often hear a 'funny sound' when the denture chews against another denture or teeth
- You have as constant fear you will lose or break your dentures
- Dogs love chewing dentures that lie unattended.



Pieter Claassen - Implant Dentist at Hanover House Dental in Tonbridge

The excitement

For most of us suffering from ill-fitting denture, painful or lose teeth, all of the problems can be eliminated through the use of dental implants.

Dr Claassen says, "Most patients normally have dental implants to stabilise loose and uncomfortable dentures or to replace embarrassing missing teeth. Having fixed teeth again means that they can eat and enjoy the food they want and have the confidence to smile in family photos again."

PRGF is 100% Natural

The system is the magic solution that helps to speed up the healing process after the procedure, promoting our own unique healing factors to burst into action. Using the revolutionary PRGF system also increases the success rate.

For the first time ever Hanover House Dental Practice are offering the PRGF system completely free of charge when a dental implant is placed. Normally this amazing new treatment would cost £350.00 but for a limited period only Dr Claassen is offering it for FREE!

Clinical Results

In a study of 1391 dental implant placements using PRGF, the success rate was 99.6%. This shows just how special PRGF is, and as our free introductory gift to you, Dr Claassen wants to provide it free of charge - but not for long. In fact, you only have until Tuesday 31st May 2016 to take up this offer!

Patients who have osteoporosis often receive medication to strengthen their bones. Unfortunately, in some cases it can lead to the opposite - impaired healing of bone structure. PRGF is excellent for patients potentially at risk of dental implant failure, shortening the time it takes for the body to accept your implants.

The Benefits

There are many benefits when a patient chooses to have dental implants and using the PRGF system only increases those benefits…

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PRGF – Plasma Rich Growth Factor is a 100% natural product specific and unique to each patient. A small amount of blood is placed in a centrifuge and separated in different layers. Only the parts, rich in growth factors are then used and applied onto the implant and the surrounding areas in the mouth.

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What people say

"Pieter worked painstakingly to achieve the perfect finish. The dental implants have given me back my smile and confidence and I no longer have to worry about what I eat"
Mrs. P. Mahoney – Speldhurst

"Having dental implants was well worth the effort and the difference was extraordinary, making it the best decision I ever made. I used to be self-conscious about my teeth. I wouldn't eat in public in case my dentures fell out and I hated how they felt in my mouth. Since having dental implants I am so much happier. I can eat what I want, when I want, including apples and I am much more confident. Even my friends have commented on how happy and relaxed I look."
Stephen Barnham - Tonbridge

Ken, a patients of Dr Claassen at Hanover House Dental Practice says… *"I wasn't certain about going down this route but now feel SMILES better!"* which is evident in his before and after treatment photos.



Mr Ken Winch BEFORE Treatment



Mr Ken Winch AFTER Treatment

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Clock changer who saw the light

William Willett was the man who came up with the idea of introducing British Summer Time after he walked near his Kent home. Yet he died before he could see its introduction some 100 years ago...

By Simon Allin
simon.allin@archant.co.uk

FOR many people, summer truly arrives when the clocks go forward and the evenings lengthen – but few are aware that the origins of this tradition can be traced back to the county.

This week marks the centenary of the introduction of British Summer Time, when the clocks went forward for the first time on May 21, 1916.

The practice was introduced to save fuel during the First World War, but it was originally proposed in 1907 by Chislehurst's William Willett.

Born in Farnham, Surrey, in 1856, Willett moved to Chislehurst in 1894, when the town was part of Kent prior to it becoming part of the London borough of Bromley in the 20th century, after establishing links to the town through a business venture.

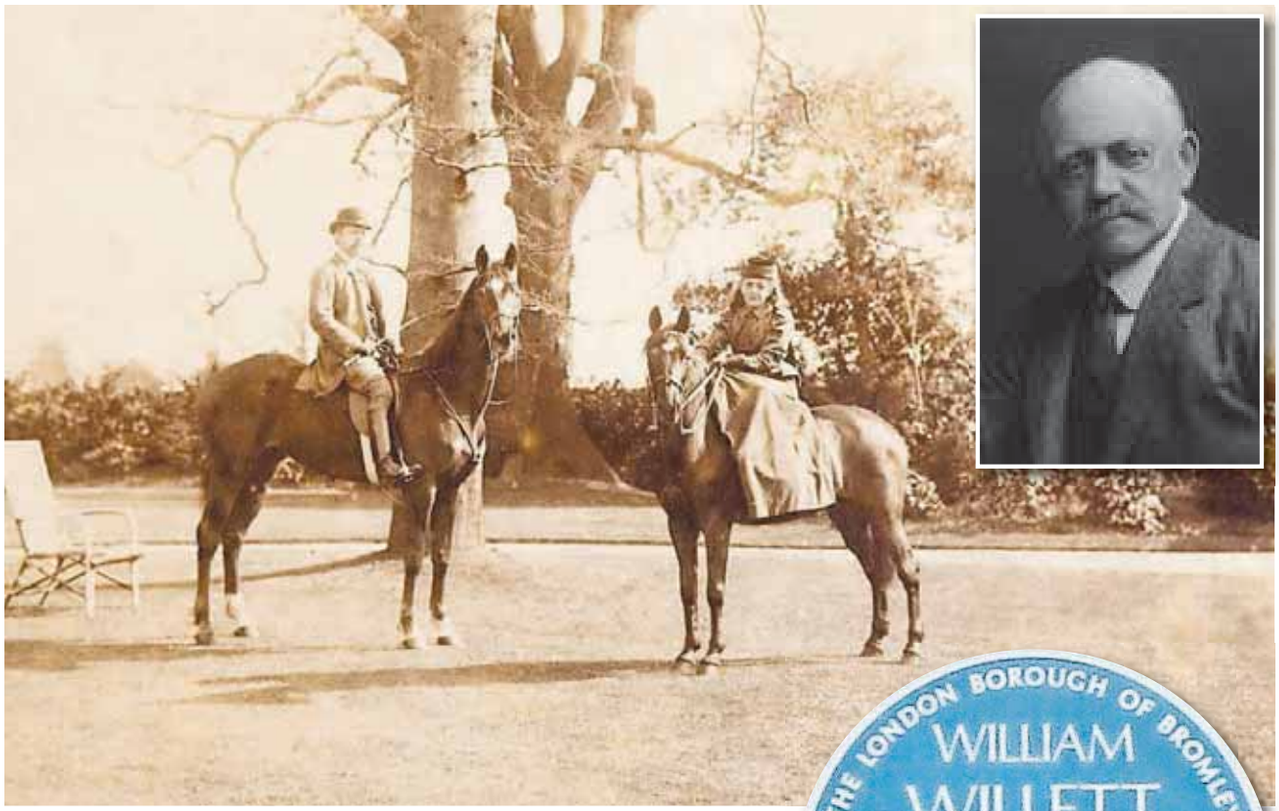
An early riser and a keen horserider, he was riding across the commons one day when he noticed that everyone else had their blinds drawn and were missing out on the long days.

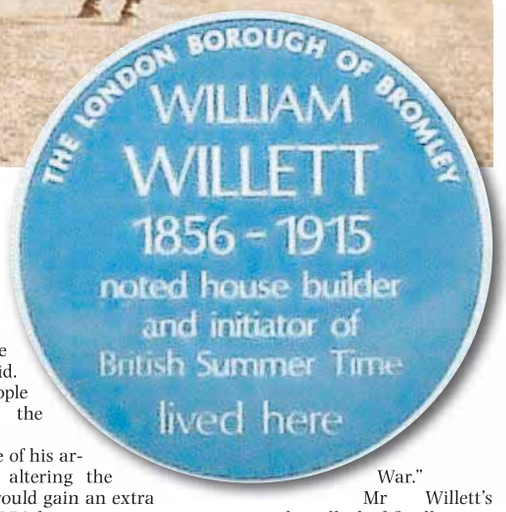
Joanna Friel, vice-chair of the Chislehurst Society, explained: "He could just see that people were wasting the daylight. Why were they staying in bed when they could be enjoying the great outdoors?"

The epiphany led him to develop the idea of altering the clocks so that people would be able to enjoy more hours of daylight.

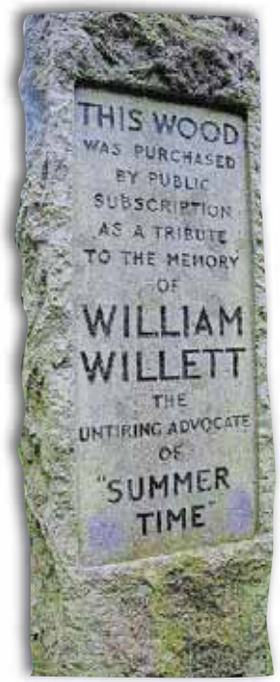
Ms Friel explained Mr Willett was driven by a number of motives; some of them altruistic, others less so.

"He was a builder by profession, and all his houses had the most beautiful windows to let the light in, so he knew he could sell houses," she said.





HISTORY: William Willett and his daughter Gertrude on horse back, and Mr Willett inset. His desire to ensure the population did not waste the daylight which dawned earlier in the summer was eventually adopted in 1916. The 100th anniversary of the clocks changing for the very first time is this weekend.



Another ambition was to improve public health – Mr Willett reasoned that an extra hour of sunlight would enable people to spend more time exercising and enjoying themselves outdoors.

"He was a philanthropist and was a great supporter of the Red Cross and Bromley cottage hospital," Ms Friel explained.

"He was going to give back to the community, and he saw it as a way of changing lifestyles."

Mr Willett moved to Kent in the hope of capitalising on the expansion of London's satellite towns.

"He was a canny businessman and he wanted to develop Chislehurst with 300 houses, because it was near to London but in the countryside," Ms Friel said.

"He bought the whole of the Camden Place estate, but rights of way issues stopped him from building houses. He was up against locals who didn't want their spaces developed – so he sided with them and built the golf course."

Mr Willett took up residence at The Cedars on the edge of the estate, where he lived with his second wife, Florence, and his four daughters.

He became an active member of the local community and was master of Chislehurst masons.

"He was up early and knew the postman and the boy who delivered the papers," Ms Friel said. "The baker remembered being greeted by him because they were the only two people up so early."

Mr Willett's pamphlet, Daylight Saving Time, in which he outlined the social and economic benefits of longer days, was published in 1907.

He calculated that the nation would save more than £2.5 million in fuel costs by implementing the scheme – the equivalent of nearly £300m today.

Although the idea secured some high-profile backers, including Sherlock Holmes author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Winston Churchill, it was initially unsuccessful.

Rory McEvoy, curator of horology at the Royal Museums Greenwich, said: "William Willett's ideas were first proposed to the Board of Trade in 1908 and went to parliament, but the bill wasn't passed."

One of the reasons was the early proposals were more complex and involved the clocks advancing in 20-minute intervals over the four Sundays in April and receding in 20-minute intervals during September.

Industrialisation had led to people regulating their lives by the clock rather than the natural changes in the seasons, and Mr McEvoy suggested that, in a way, Mr Willett was reviving older traditions.

"The fact was, what got to William Willett was that people were living by the clock," he said. "He thought people were wasting the daylight.

"This was one of his arguments – by altering the clocks, people would gain an extra leisure hour for 154 days a year.

"In the margins of Churchill's notes on his copy of the parliamentary bill he says that it is a somewhat optimistic view of our climate."

A passionate believer in his cause, Mr Willett was undeterred by his early setback and continued his campaign to change the clocks.

Mr McEvoy continued: "He had good intentions with the scheme and he was in a fairly privileged position. He had good contacts and campaigned extensively, writing letters to all and sundry at the time about his ideas."

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 changed people's attitudes considerably, making them more receptive to Mr Willett's idea – particularly after Germany changed its clocks to take advantage of the extra daylight.

Ms Friel said: "Willet's whole idea was to save the fuel in factories and offices. It didn't capture people's imagination until they came to make the changes because of the Great War."

Mr Willett's time, quite literally, had finally come – but sadly he did not live long enough to witness the introduction of the changes, dying of influenza in 1915, at the age of 58.

Daylight saving time was introduced by the Summer Time Act 1916 and first came into effect on May 21.

"When it was implemented it did have a knock on effect – on consumption of gas in particular," Mr McEvoy said. "The gas companies were complaining of loss of revenue."

Now, there is growing support for the idea of keeping British Summer Time throughout the year, and Ms Friel believes Mr Willett would have approved.

A memorial sundial to William Willett stands in Petts Wood near Chislehurst, although the pioneer of BST is not a well-known figure today.

"It's a shame. He is a forgotten hero because he died too soon," Ms Friel said.

"There were shafts of sunlight on his coffin at his funeral in Chislehurst."

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ARTISTIC: Jonzi D founded the Breakin' Convention festival 13 years ago. Picture by: Paul Hampartsoumian

Festival of hip hop dance is coming over to Canterbury

Molly Kersey-Law spoke to festival founder Jonzi D about the upcoming event

ANNUAL hip hop festival Breakin' Convention will be making its way to Canterbury next week - and artistic director Jonzi D says the event will be 'amazing'.

The annual festival began at London's performing arts venue Sadler's Wells before setting off on a tour around the UK - stopping at Canterbury from May 28 to 29.

It features music, hip hop dance, graffiti and workshops.

The event was created by dancer, spoken word artist and director Jonzi D.

He has previously toured the UK with TAG - Just Writing My Name and IVAN in 2006 and rap theatre piece Markus the Sadist in 2009.

Speaking about his inspiration for the Breakin' Convention festival, he explained: "What made me create it was the fact that there was no festival of hip hop dance around. Touring my own work I realised that there were artists around the world doing it.

"When I came back to London I spoke to Alistair Spalding – artistic director and chief executive of Sadler's Wells – who was head of dance at Southbank.

"I said to him 'look, we should do a festival of hip hop dance'.

"When he got his job at Sadler's Wells he got in contact and said 'do you want to do it' and I said yes.

"Some of the ideas that I had to do with putting graffiti on the walls he was really open to, which made me realise 'this is definitely the place to do this'.

"It had a lot to do with getting hip hop artists who are so good at what they do into these spaces because for some reason they weren't, which was ludicrous to me."

The festival is currently in its 13th year.

"I think we have kept the blueprint of the festival we originally started with but we have included a lot of activities," explained Jonzi D.

"We have increased the graffiti, so people can try their own names out with graffiti artists who are there as mentors."

A number of international acts will be performing at the Canterbury venue next week.

These include France's Antoinette Gomis, who will be presenting solo piece Images.

Spain's award-winning Iron Skulls crew will also be presenting the Sinestesia – which shows the dancers morph into post-apocalyptic survivors – and a crew from the Netherlands, The Ruggeds, will be performing Adrenaline.

"You are going to see some of the most amazing hip hop dance from around the world but you are also going to see hip hop dance from around the corner," he said.

"It's going to be something that Kent has never had before.

"This is our first time doing Breakin' Convention in the area.

"You are really getting it at a good time."

Breakin' Convention will be performed at the Gulbenkian.

On Saturday the main stage show, which is hosted by Jonzi D, will be starting at 7pm.

It will be beginning at 3pm the following day.

For more information about the activities taking place over the two days, you can visit www.gulbenkian.co.uk.

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Women Seeking

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GENUINE, GSH, attractive, outgoing professional female, 55. Enjoys keeping fit, socialising and travel, WLTM similar male for relationship. **Text only Mailbox: 5453851**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3000 Box 419673**

MATURE lady early 80s, family orientated, likes dancing, holidays especially cruising, WLTM similar aged gentleman with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421427**

KIM, 32yrs, attractive blonde lady seeks discreet gent for daytime distractions. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3004 Box 421657**

JO, mature understanding worldly Essex lady, seeks generous gent for fantasy role-play, discretion assured. **Text only Mailbox: 5320299**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3008 Box: 409715**

FEMALE, blue eyes, slim and pretty, from South Africa, young fifties, seeking a sincere, retired gentleman, who resides close to the sea. **Text only Mailbox: 5456242**

LUCY first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. **Tel: 0906 515 3024 Box: 420237**

SINGLE late 60s female, n/s, GSOH, likes going out and being active, not fun on my own, seeking single male, 66-70, n/s, with GSOH, to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421433**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3016 Box: 413399**

MATURE lady early 80s, family orientated, likes dancing, holidays especially cruising, WLTM similar aged gentleman with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421429**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3020 Box 421375**

ORIENTAL lady, honest, caring, loves walking, WLTM a reliable, sincere man for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 5443434**

WENDY, mature, passionate ladylike divorcee seeks no strings casual friendship/fun with gent any age. **Tel: 0906 515 3032 Box 421605**

FEMALE, young 58, 5ft2, size 14, blonde, bubbly, GSOH, warm, loving, kind and caring, loves music, animals, seaside, looking for that special someone. **Text only Mailbox: 4715158**

DIANNA, petite blonde lady, 38yrs, divorced, no kids, wants to spice up her life with new male friends, 35+, might lead to more who knows but no strings. ACA. **Box: 4027026**



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GENUINE single female 49, seeking good-natured, intelligent, polite, single male for friendship/relationship. **Text only to Mailbox: 4198603**

KIND, caring lady of African origin, living in UK for past 20 years, looking for a gentleman who is kind and caring, must have a GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421041**

ANGELA, 53, African origin, looking for a kind, genuine, caring gentleman, 60 years +. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421039**

SINGLE slim female, 68, n/s, GSOH, likes cooking, walking etc, seeks male, single, slim 65-70, n/s, with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420091**

SLIM female GSOH, 5'3, Likes walking, pub lunches, days out, looking for soul mate, smart appearance, similar interests N/S GSOH, easy going. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4762600**

KIND lady, 50s, been broken hearted, seeks kind, genuine man for caring relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419889**

MARION, early 70s, young at heart, GSOH, active, likes walking, gardening, meals out, travel, theatre and animals, looking for male friendship to share interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419657**

CHANTELLE, 5ft3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, like nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy. Littlehampton. **Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883**

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MARIE, very lonely middle-aged woman, looking for a kind hearted older man, late 70s/early 80s for friendship/companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418955**

RACHEL late 40s, blonde, blue eyes and very voluptuous. Looking for a kind, caring honest man. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418741**

ESSEX lady, mid 60's, adaptable, seeking nice male, likes most things. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418537**

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418117**

HELEN, widow 58, medium build, 5ft 4ins, blonde, GSOH, likes a chat, days out, looking to start again with someone of similar age. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376243**

DEBBIE brown eyed attractive social female, romantic, good listener, loves children, looking for similar nice male/dad to get to know, hopefully leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414383**

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for fun friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4819793**

GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435**

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603**

PAT, 68, young at heart, slim, proud 4' 11" GSOH, N/S, likes walking etc Whistable area, seeks similar slim easy going male 60-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081**

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably, older, N/S male with own car. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537**

Men Seeking

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MALE, 54, shyish, looking for fun times with a lady, 60-70, with GSOH, status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422431**

JOHN, 42yrs sophisticated business man wanting a lady by his side to spoil and entertain. Looks unimportant but must have a super personality and kind manner. **Box 4086072**

CHRIS, from Folkestone, 71, 5ft9, widower, green eyes, lonely, n/s, OHAC, likes gardening, the coast, pubs, dining out, holidays, cruises, days out, WLTM similar lady to share interests, can travel. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422375**

MIKE, 64, outgoing person, enjoys life, likes sport, cricket, nice meals out, holidays, WLTM someone to share interests and quality time. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422329**

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

HARLOW male, 40, kind, attractive, happy, considerate looking to meet slim female for LTR, children welcome. **Text only Mailbox: 5468389**

FRIENDLY passionate male, 55, 6ft, medium build, clean, discreet, lots of TLC to offer, seeks female for fun times. Canterbury **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381222**

OUTGOING male, seeking attractive female, likes sports, music, cinema and nights out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414793**

MALE, 58, very outgoing, looking for attractive female, slim to medium build, for adult fun and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421883**

SLIM, 5ft 6 white male WLTM 18 to 42 year old lady for friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 5441709**

RETIRED, smart, 68 year old, 5ft5, I enjoy eating out, walking, holidays and golf, WLTM a slim, attractive lady, 60-68, for a loving, tender relationship, to enjoy these times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421853**

MALE, 55 looking for mature lady for outings and adult fun, easy going, GSOH, nice looking and a bit shy. **Text only Mailbox: 4922399**

YOUNG 50s male looking for discreet daytime kisses and cuddles with nice female. Kent and Sussex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421601**

FEMININE sensual female, slim-medium build wanted by slim, kind male for daytime meets, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414809**

JIM 45, slim 5'8, blue eyes, short brown hair, very fit, would like to meet older lady for regular N S A fun. East Sussex. **Text only Mailbox: 4529089**

NEIL, Looking to meet lady for fun, possible LTR with someone special, accom and travel w/Sussex, age/looks unimportant. **Text only Mailbox: 4435323**

MALE 50, GSOH, looking for soul mate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387485**

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversation, seeking nice man to share good times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383**

KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127**

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874**

BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025**

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349**

FEMALE seeking male for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413809**

WIDOWER 67, N/S, likes real ale, country music, gardening, DIY, seeks N/S female for lots of TLC. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 381143**

CHRIS widower, likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191**

MALE, 6ft, slim, 67, divorced, retired, likes social drinks, meals out, nights in and all other, WLTM lady with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421351**

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MATURE cross dressing guy, seeking lady willing to apply a full make over and give a manicure and pedicure. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421341**

KEN 61, 6ft, slim, likes socialising, drinking, animals, countryside, seaside, meals out, seeks similar lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333017**

SHY male seeks confident, strong willed lady, to take the lead for mutual fun, looks/age unimportant. ACA **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421223**

MALE, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

MALE, 54, looking for discreet lady, 60-70, for adult fun and a special friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421085**

BARRY, 50, 6ft, well-built, seeks lovely lady for good times, loving and enjoying life. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421047**

DAVE 64 solvent, working, not bad looking, would like to meet slim, fun to be with female, 50 to 60, to get to know. Chelmsford area. **Text only to Mailbox: 4368820**

MALE 38, good-looking, GSOH, seeks lady, 35-55 for laughter and lots of fun. Kent/Sussex. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 369301**

CALM, kind and good company, male seeking a lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419733**

MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469**

YOUNG 60yr old male, knows how to treat a lady, seeking special lady to spoil for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417909**



PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, likes holidays, reading, cinema, WLTM similar professional lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420767**

MALE, 60, medium build, gosh, seeks attractive female, under 50, for no strings, discreet, daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420621**

CLINT, 37, kind, caring, honest and WLTM someone of any age who is similar and looking for a relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419951**

HEALTHY 61yr old male, N/S, medium build, likes France, cooking, gardening, seeks female, 50-60 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 286360**

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56ft, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025**



BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

NEVILLE 5ft 6ins, Caribbean, likes wine, nights in, seeks female to spend the rest of his life with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333911**

DAVE 46, seeks active female for walking, climbing and outdoor fun. Days out and evenings in. Friendly and GSOH. **Text only to Mailbox no: 5338933**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, just retired, own house, loves holidays, WLTM a lady for meals out, and to enjoy each others company. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419751**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

Gay Seeking

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PETER, bi male, aged 68, inexperienced seeks bi male for fun and friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 5459879**

MALE medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

MATURE bi male seeks similar for fun and friendship. **Text only Mailbox: 4641909**

EASYGOING guy, 62, likes outdoors, countryside, walks, seeks slim, N/S quiet guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 333477**

GAY male, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ALAN, 68, straight acting gay man, kind, caring with GSOH, likes sport, art and going on holidays, looking for another gay man. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421529**

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Stevi Ritchie joins Ashleigh and Pudsey in a family adventure

By Molly Kersey-Law

molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk



FUN: Stevi Ritchie will be performing in interactive show Mission Impudseyble

BRITAIN'S Got Talent winners Ashleigh and Pudsey and TV personality Stevi Ritchie will be performing together in family-friendly show Mission Impudseyble.

Trainer Ashleigh Butler and her beloved pet Pudsey shot to fame after winning the sixth series of ITV show Britain's Got Talent in 2012.

The duo will play K9 intelligence agents in the interactive adventure show, which will be performed at Dartford's Orchard Theatre.

They will be finding clues, solving puzzles and breaking codes as they attempt to stop their arch-nemesis Dr Feline from achieving world domination.

X Factor and Celebrity Big Brother finalist Stevi Ritchie will be joining them on stage.

"It's a great cast," he said.

"Pudsey and Ashleigh are great, they are so talented and lovely.

"I was a big fan years ago when they were on Britain's Got Talent.

"I was overjoyed when they won. A dog has never won it and Pudsey is so beautiful.

"He's unbelievably well-trained.

"I don't know how he does it."

"Ashleigh's a talented girl and a really great actress."

Speaking about his part in the show, he explained: "My character is called Karl, he's like Dr Feline's sidekick.

"He's a bit thick, a bit stupid and childish, he's like a kid in a lot of ways. He's a cat burglar but he hasn't got a clue, he just goes along with what everyone says.

"He's stopping Pudsey and Ashleigh from saving the world and he realises that he wants to be good.

"It's a great show for all the family and kids.

"There's a lot of audience participation," he added.

He said that he is looking forward to performing on stage at the Orchard Theatre.

"I did do a show there before.

"I know that theatre quite well. I am only up the road in Colchester.

"I can't wait to perform there again. There's lots of old memories," he said.

Mission Impudseyble will be running at the Orchard Theatre from May 29 to 30.

Tickets range from £16 to £19.

For further details, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

The songs of Glenn Miller



THE Astor Big Band will be performing the hits of Glenn Miller in More Miller Magic.

The show will be at the Theate Royal Margate on June 18 at 7.30pm.

For details, call 01843 292795.

Classic hits in stage show

MUSICAL show Save The Last Dance For Me will be performed at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells.

The production will run from July 4 to 9 and features songs such as Teenager in Love and Viva Las Vegas.

Call 01892 530613 to book.

Wedding dress exhibition



AN exhibition of wedding dresses and floral displays - Celebration of Weddings Through The Ages - will be at Saint Margaret's Church, Hothfield, from May 28 to 29.

Entry to the event is free.

Frazey Ford will perform

FOLK-POP singer and songwriter Frazey Ford will be performing at the Folkestone Quarterhouse on July 14.

The show will be starting at 7.30pm.

For more details or to book tickets call the box office on 01303 760750 or alternatively visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.

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Fun craft and design event



THE Weald of Kent Craft and Design Show will be held in the grounds of Penshurst Place from September 9 to 11.

The event will be open from 10am to 5pm.

Call 01425 277988 to book.

Tale of The Cat in the Hat

A STAGE adaptation of Dr Seuss' well-loved children's tale The Cat in the Hat will be performed at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford.

The production will be running from June 2 to 6, with performances at 10am, midday, 1pm and 3pm.

Call 01322 220000 to book tickets.

A solo show in Margate



SOLO show Tell Me Anything will be performed at the Theatre Royal Margate on September 17 at 7.30pm.

It stars David Ralfe.

For further details, visit www.theatreroyalmargate.com.

Gravesend's pantomime

PANTOMIME Jack and the Beanstalk will be performed at The Woodville, Gravesend, from December 10 to January 2 2017.

The show is presented by Magic Beans Pantomimes and stars singer Antony Costa, who shot to fame with boy band Blue.

Visit www.woodville.co.uk for details.

Musical on menopause featuring three stars

By Molly Kersey-Law
molly.kersey-law@archant.co.uk



An 'uplifting' musical exploring the menopause will be performed in Tunbridge Wells next month.

Menopause the Musical features a number of songs which have been rewritten in order to 'capture the mood' of the experience – symptoms of which include hot flushes and mood swings.

EastEnders actress Cheryl Fergison, singer Coleen Nolan and star of BBC hospital drama Casualty Rebecca Wheatley will be performing in the show.

"This show won't change your life or stop you taking your clothes off while watching telly," explained Ms Wheatley.

"But it will guarantee you a great night out. And having a group of women in one hall all able to laugh at the changes women go through during menopause is a massively uplifting sensation.

"And here's the thing; the menopause stage isn't all bad. By the time they hit it women know so much more about themselves. They have a developed confidence, knowledge and a lovely, healthy cynicism about life."

Ms Wheatley acknowledges that the menopause create some confusion.

"There was a time when women believed that with the arrival of the menopause their attractiveness departed and sex was a thing of the past. Not now," she said.

"Years ago, I'd be having a blue rinse at this stage, not getting my hair dyed flame red. And who wants to surrender to middle age? Not me. I want to be a thoroughly disgraceful fifty-something."

Menopause the Musical will be performed at the Assembly Hall Theatre on June 2.

The performance will be starting at 7.30pm. Tickets are £22 or £20 with concessions.

For more details or to book tickets to the show you can visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk or alternatively call the box office on 01892 530613.



STARS: Cheryl Fergison and Linda Nolan



MUSICAL: The show features a number of re-written songs

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'Busy is definitely good' says MasterChef winner

Chef Simon Wood has been keeping busy and released debut cookbook At Home With Simon Wood

FOR lifelong foodie Simon Wood, a career in the kitchen was always a case of 'when', rather than 'if'.

"I've always wanted to cook, I've always watched cookery shows, I've always read cookbooks and I've always wanted to be involved in that. In any concept," the 39-year-old said.

"So if I can get a cookery TV show, I want one. If I can write a cookery book, I want to do it. If I can win MasterChef, I want to do it."

And he's a man of his word. Since applying for, and winning, MasterChef 2015 – "I got into work one morning and someone had sent me an email that really rubbed me up the wrong way. I applied and never looked back" – Mr Wood, dubbed the series' brightest ever talent, has enjoyed a whirlwind of success.

"It's been crazy; it's been the quickest year of my life. The best but the quickest," quips the Mancunian.

"It was a massive culture shock, though. Sometimes I still wake up and think, 'Oh God, it's really real', but I've done so much and there's so much more to come."

Rapidly ticking off his bucket list, the father-of-four is seriously busy – first with his debut cookbook, At Home With Simon Wood.

"I want people to look at the book and say, 'My God, look at that; I couldn't do it', but then actually have a good read and think, 'Yes I can'," he enthuses of the book's 'fine dining made simple' ethos.



FOODIE: Simon Wood has released his debut cookbook

"Don't be scared of doing it wrong: just learn and practise," he adds.

There's a section dedicated to the art of plating up, too, and chapters covering a range of themes, including salads, non-gluten, pasta, meat, sweet things, the sea and vegetarian dishes.

"Hopefully it will inspire people to turn out some good quality food for friends and family, and not spend a fortune doing it," says Mr Wood, who suggests going for a taster course menu – five dishes, each from different sections of the book – for a well-balanced dinner party.

While penning recipes is a straightforward process for the one-time burger-flipper, he admits that whittling them down was slightly more complicated.

"I don't dislike anything, so I find picking ingredients to put together really easy. The most difficult thing is what not to put in ," he exclaims.

As well as his book release, Mr Wood recently landed his "dream job", as executive chef at his beloved Oldham Athletic AFC.

"I'm going to be opening a fine dining restaurant [at the stadium] too," he reveals.

"Initially, it will be a pop-up on the third Thursday of each month, called The Boardroom by Simon Wood.

"So there's the book, the pop-up boardroom and the full business," Wood muses. "Busy is good. Busy is definitely good."

Tragic tale of romance

OPERA and Ballet International will be bringing Ellen Kent-production La Boheme to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall.

Featuring the music of composer Giacomo Puccini, the romantic opera tells the tragic tale of consumptive Mimi and her love for a penniless writer.

The show will take place on April 20 2017 at 7.30pm and tickets can be booked from www.atgtickets.com/folkestone.

The hits of The Beatles

FEATURING more than 40 of The Beatles' hits, Let It Be will be performed at the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury.

The show will be running from June 6 to 11 and includes songs Twist and Shout, A Hard Day's Night, Hey Jude and Yesterday.

There will be performances at 2.30pm and 7.30pm and tickets range from £18 to £37.

For further details, you can visit www.marlowetheatre.com.

Musical in Maidstone

KENT Musical Theatre Society will be performing West Side Story at the Hazlitt Theatre Maidstone from August 30 to September 1.

The modern-day version of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet follows the story of two young lovers, who find themselves caught between rival gangs the Jets and the Sharks.

For more information, or to book, visit www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk.

Duo come to Bromley

MUSICAL duo Chas and Dave will be performing in Bromley next month.

The show features hits such as Rabbit, Ain't No Pleasing You and Margate.

The pair will be on stage at the Churchill Theatre on June 6.

The show will be starting at 7.30pm and tickets range from £28.50 to £38.50.

For more details about the performance, you can visit www.churchilltheatre.co.uk.

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Kent on Sunday
kent-life.co.uk kentnews.co.uk
FOOD&DRINK AWARDS2016

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ALARIS

NOMINATIONS are now being invited for the 2016 Kent Life and Kent onSunday Food & Drink Awards. The awards dinner will take place at Ashford International Hotel on October 17 from 6.30pm to midnight.

The prestigious awards, which launched in 2013, are designed to champion, highlight and offer a showcase to the great and the good of the region's food and drink industry, including local producers and suppliers, small farming businesses, chefs, restaurants, pubs, cafes and hoteliers.

All will be people who care about the countryside and the future of our local environment.

The companies included will all be nominated by you, our Kent Life and Kent on Sunday readers.

We want to know if you've enjoyed a fantastic meal at your local pub or have been impressed by the produce and service at your neighbourhood farmers' market or farm shop.

The nomination form is available here and will be repeated. It is also available to complete online at kentfda.co.uk, where you can read more about the awards and see pictures of last year's winners.

Entries close on August 7. Our handpicked panel of high-profile judges who all live or work in Kent will then select a shortlist, starting the independent judging process where finalists will be visited or interviewed to determine a worthy winner in each category.

All finalists will be invited to the prestigious awards ceremony, where they will enjoy a reception and three-course meal with wine before finding out if they are a winner.

This is our fourth Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Food & Drink Awards and we are immensely proud to be able to offer you once again the opportunity to reward and recognise the deserving businesses within our local food and drink industry that go above and beyond expectations.

These awards are what you make of them so if you are the owner of a restaurant, a chef or local producer then spread the word among your clients, customers and visitors.

It takes no time at all to make your nomination. You can email, post or nominate online.

We are looking for quality over quantity, focusing on good comments rather than simply the number of nominations received, so everybody is in with a chance no matter how big or small their business.

■ **Don't forget to let us know when you have made your recommendation on our Twitter page @kentlife and @KOSMedia by using #kentfda – similarly, if you are looking for nominations, please use this hashtag**

Kent Life and *Kent on Sunday* Food & Drink Awards 2016 Nomination Form

Nominate your Kent food and drink favourites by using this form or email us at **kentfda@archant.co.uk**

Please post your entry form to:
Food & Drink Awards 2016.
Archant Kent,
Kent House, 81 Station Road,
Ashford TN23 1PP

Or you can email us at:
kentfda@archant.co.uk

Copies of the form and posters to advertise your entry are available __at **www.kent-life.co.uk** and at **www.kentnews.co.uk**.

The closing date for entries is Sunday, August 7, 2016

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Newcomer of the Year
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Who?
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Cafe of the Year

Who?
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Who?
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Who?
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Who?
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Kent Food & Drink Hero of the Year

Who?
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Where?
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NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

This popular category is open to anyone in the food and drink industry who has started a new venture within the last 18 months.

We want to know what impact they have made on the local community and if they have started to achieve any success further afield.

Are they helping to promote Kent food and drink to a new audience or have they found a new way to promote an old favourite?

INDEPENDENT FOOD OR DRINK RETAILER OF THE YEAR

This celebrates that special food or drink shop that we all treasure.

The retailer who includes wonderful local produce in their offering and knows where all their stock comes from to make that special link between field and plate.

Our winner will have a special 'must-have' range as well as making a real contribution to their local community.

Paying a visit to their shop will be a treat in itself.

CAFE OF THE YEAR

This category has changed from the previous Tea Shop of the Year to include places that also specialise in coffee! Tea and coffee shops are an integral part of the Kent food and drink scene. Who makes the best tea and coffees, serves the nicest cakes and biscuits and the freshest scones? Are the sandwiches freshly cut and liberally filled?

Most importantly, are most of the ingredients locally sourced? We look forward to hearing your favourites.

FOOD PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

This category celebrates our local producers.

We are looking for someone who consistently provides both top quality local produce and service to their customers.

We are also keen to hear of any innovations.

If they're doing something new, we'd like to hear about it.

So if your local baker, grocer or farmer delights then please let us know.

DRINK PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

This category celebrates our local drink producers.

Whether it's gorgeous Kentish fizz or delicious juice, we want to find the producers who play such a vital role in the county's food and drink economy.

We want to know who you think makes the best drink, alcoholic or not, in the county, and what it is that makes it so special.

We are keen to hear of any innovations, so if they're doing something new, for example, introducing a fabulous new flavour, then we would like to all hear about it.

FARM SHOP OF THE YEAR

A good farm shop needs to have that extra-special something to tempt farmers away from their local supermarkets.

Are the staff friendly and knowledgeable, is the range of produce and the layout of an excellent standard, does your local farm shop offer a box scheme?

Is most of the produce sold there grown or raised on that farm, or nearby and if not would the owner be able to tell you where it is from?

Nominate your favourite farm shop now.

FARMERS' MARKET OF THE YEAR

The key to a good farmers' market Market is not only the range of produce and the quality of its stalls but also the principles that it supports – for example, does it work as a co-operative with other farmers? Is most of the produce sold there grown or raised locally? Are the stallholders welcoming and knowledgeable? ? Let us know so we can tell everyone the best place to go.

PUB OF THE YEAR

A good pub these days has to offer more than a warm welcome and excellent ale. We're looking for an inn that also offers delicious locally-sourced food, fantastic customer service and real value for money. Pubs are genuinely the hub of their local community.

If you know a great one, even if it isn't your local, let us all know.

RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

The Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Restaurant of the Year needs to offer an incomparable dining experience, from the ambience to the service and most importantly the food. Is it locally sourced? Do they support local producers and are they recognised on the menu? Do they have local as well as international wines and champagnes and can the staff tell you more if you ask?

CHEF OF THE YEAR

Kent is blessed with some outstanding chefs working in a fantastic array of restaurants. The Chef of the Year should be someone who has devoted him or herself to serving the best possible food. They'll demonstrate technical ability, use of seasonal ingredients, presentation of the food and an understanding of how flavours work together. Above all, we are looking for passion – that magic ingredient that defines true greatness in the kitchen.

CUSTOMER SERVICE OF THE YEAR

Most of our awards recognise customer service in some form. This category celebrates this vital element for its own sake.

Do you know a person, organisation or establishment that offers fabulous service that goes above and beyond what you expect?

We all know excellent service when we have received it, now is your chance to get it recognised. If you know a person, company, producer, pub, shop or restaurant that is a delight to deal with, then let us know.

KENT FOOD AND DRINK HERO OF THE YEAR

Kent has a food and drink scene that is among the most vibrant in the UK - as you would expect from the Garden of England.

As well as being blessed with some of the final local produce around, the county also has a variety of fantastic eateries located in local towns and villages.

This category will be celebrating the individual who has made a positive impact on the county's food or drink community.

Do you know someone who goes the extra mile in order to help promote Kent to a wider audience?

Someone who has show that they are passionate about local produce throughout?

Now is the chance for you to nominate your very own Kent Food and Drink hero and give them the recognition that they deserve.

Get in contact with us and let us know who you think would be a worthy winner.

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Getting creative in your outdoor space

THE bank holiday weekend is a great time to get outside and do some gardening.

With the weather improving and summer on the way, now is a great time for keen gardeners to get creative and try something new.

How about creating some hanging baskets for your outdoor space?

You can buy hanging baskets pretty cheaply these days from garden centres, but the choice of colour and plant is often limited, so it's much more satisfying to do it yourself.

Wire baskets are among the most popular, which you can either line with sphagnum moss, coconut fibre or other eco-friendly made-to-fit material with ready-made holes at the sides so you can plant into the side of the basket as well as out of the top of it. I usually add a smaller circle of black polythene to the inner base of the liner to reduce water seepage.

But there are also many pretty closed-sided baskets on the market which are easier to plant as you only have to put plants in the top, and easier to water, but you can't achieve the all-round effect you can with an open-sided basket.

For some, the biggest bugbear about hanging baskets is the watering, but you can now buy compost which is specially formulated for containers, incorporating water-retaining agents and feed. If you can't find that and are just using annuals in your basket, go for multi-purpose compost, adding water-retaining granules to the liner before the compost, and slow-release plant food pellets.

If you are planting a longer-lasting basket with more permanent plants such as hostas and heucheras, or evergreens including skimmias and variegated ivies, use John Innes No 2 compost.

For open-sided baskets, place the basket on top of a bucket, which will allow easy access from all sides.





GARDENING: You can create some hanging baskets over the weekend



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Insert the liner and press it into position. Have your compost in a bucket, so you can add your pre-soaked water-retaining crystals to it, as well as slow-release fertiliser granules, and mix thoroughly.

If you want to plant through the sides of the basket and the holes in the liner aren't pre-cut, make cuts in the liner for each plant using a knife.

Add enough compost to the basket to level off below the side holes, then plant your plants through the holes, either from the outside, compressing the roots so they will go through the holes, or from the inside, carefully feeding the shoots through the hole.

Build up another layer of compost, firming those first plants as you go, and continue planting. Trailing plants such as lobelia, verbena and bacopa should be planted around the sides and at the edge of the top of the basket, while upright plants should be placed in the centre.

While historically hanging baskets have incorporated a riot of different colours and plant varieties, more recently, people have gone for single varieties. Perhaps that's because they tend to be lower maintenance as the same plants will have the same needs in terms of watering and feeding.

If you are planting cherry tomatoes such as 'Hundreds and Thousands' or 'Tumbler' in a hanging basket, water-retaining granules will not be sufficient and you'll need to water the basket twice a day in summer and feed regularly with tomato plant food.

Don't want to be a slave to the watering can? Go for drought-tolerant plants such as pelargoniums, helichrysum, osteospermum and diascia. Of course, additional greenery such as ivy will rarely let you down.

And remember that if you are planting your baskets up now, most of the annuals you use won't be frost hardy, so make sure you bring them under a porch or under cover in the evening until all chance of frost has passed.

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Ditch the screens and enjoy exercise

Many parents will know how difficult it is to get their children to ditch technology and get outdoors to do some exercise instead. Athlete **Sally Gunnell** is supporting the Getting Kids Moving initiative and has some advice that could help families get active during the upcoming bank holiday weekend

AS the only female British athlete to have held concurrent Olympic, World, European and Commonwealth titles, Sally Gunnell is more aware than most mums about the benefits of physical activity.

But having been a top-class athlete and being married to an athletics coach and former runner doesn't mean she finds it easy to get her own kids away from screens and enjoying exercise.

Knowing how tough it can be to get children off the sofa and physically active, Ms Gunnell's championing the new Getting Kids Moving initiative, which explores the challenges to physical activity faced by today's families, and suggests solutions to encourage children to move more.

The 49-year-old mum says: "Even though I'm really enthusiastic about physical activity, and enjoy it as much as I can, my kids definitely still need a lot of encouragement to get active.

"With three children, who all love their computer games and are happy to enjoy themselves in front of the TV, I know how difficult it can be to tear kids away. As a family, we've had to put in place a lot of rules and get quite creative about making sure our kids get moving regularly."



ACTIVE: Sally Gunnell (pictured above with her family) suggests dog walking and bike riding to help keep children moving

New research carried out by Leeds Beckett University for the Getting Kids Moving report, commissioned by Ferrero's +Sport Move and Learn Project, found the struggle to balance demanding work commitments with family life means many UK children aren't achieving the recommended amount of daily physical activity.

While almost all parents believe it's important for children to be active, a third underestimate how much exercise their children need, and one in five (20 per cent) believe just 30 minutes is sufficient. In fact, NHS guidelines recommend children over five are active for an hour a day.

"Helping kids understand how much better being active makes them feel is the most important thing. Making it a fun way to spend time together as a family is a huge part of this."

Part of the difficulty in getting children moving is the amount of time they spend on screens - four in five parents report their child uses screens in the week (79 per cent) and at the weekend (81 per cent), and more than half (51 per cent) admit their children spend more than three hours at weekends looking at screens.

Yet one in five parents don't put any limits on their children's screen time.

"Screen time is dominating their

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lives, and the time they're using screens is when they would have been active," says Ms Gunnell, who has three sons – Finley, 17, Luca, 15, and Marley, 11 – with her husband Jonathan Bigg, a former 800m runner and an athletics coach.

"Like all other kids, it seems, mine do like screens – I'm not one of these parents whose kids are always out running. I do really have to monitor their screen time and get them to do other things – it's about getting the balance right."

Ms Gunnell's approach seems to have worked a treat with her eldest son Finley, who's keeping up the family tradition and is a top 10 junior 400m runner and is currently moving up to 800m.

"We're really lucky with him, he makes a lot of sacrifices for his running and is really dedicated, which is lovely to see," she says proudly.

"I do feel sorry for him, because he stands on the start line and somebody will announce that he's my son. But he's had to get used to that, and he deals with it really well."

Ms Gunnell points out: "The best money we ever spent was on a trampoline – we try to make it a bit of family fun, getting outside and spending half an hour jumping together."

The report recommends that parents encourage children to be active by setting a good example and being active themselves.

It also points out that even small changes like a 15-minute walk in the park can make a big difference, and it suggests getting active outside as much as possible, including walking or cycling.

"There's so much you can enjoy as a family," says Ms Gunnell, who suggests dog walking, treasure hunts, bike riding, indoor assault courses, camping, bushwalking, and involving children in little chores around the home, like gardening, washing the car and cleaning.

"It doesn't need to be expensive - just keeping an activity box at home or in the car ready with a bat and ball can help the whole family be ready to move," she adds.

"Getting active can be incredible fun - 20 minutes spent doing physical activity together involves more quality engagement than watching TV."



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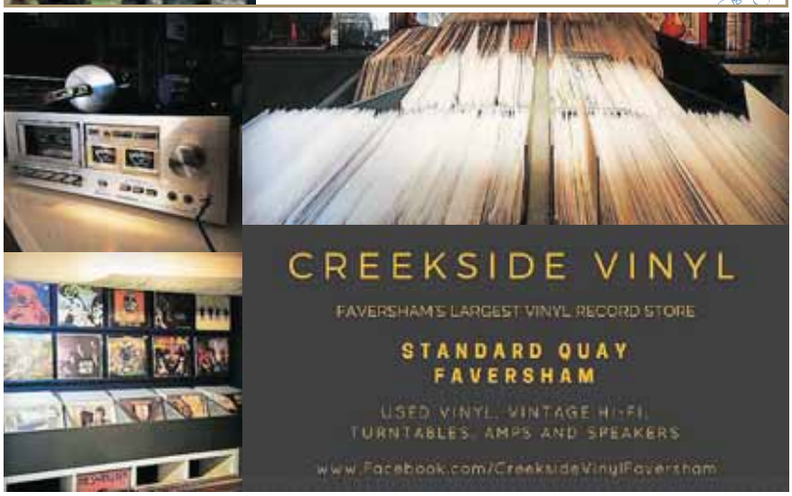
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Too aggressive tone to leave

THE one thing which strikes me about almost every letter you have printed from those wanting to leave the EU is the undercurrent of anger.

Every letter releases a flurry of figures they carefully select to back up their arguments, without appreciating that for all the negatives they spout, there are plenty of positives too. Those they just completely ignore. It rather undermines any sense of reasoned argument.

If we opt to leave and the gloomy predictions for our economy play out then that is the rest of our lives paying a very high price indeed for buying the arguments of people who think simply by shouting loudly they have the most compelling argument.

Jim Turner,
Sittingbourne

EU? Our only option is to quit

I'M afraid Mr Duff [KoS letters, 15/05] is deluded if he thinks allowing ourselves to be run by another 27 countries, comes with a free ride.

We pay the EU £350 million each week, have just paid a £1.7bn surcharge and owe £34bn towards the EU 'black hole' of £259bn.

As just released, we are paying £3.2 billion to educate EU children, another billion for EU 'health tourists' and billions more in benefits for EU citizens.

There are numerous 'hidden' costs, such as paying to make 40,000 fisherman redundant with the EU taking over 44 per cent of our waters! We pay benefits to families in EU countries because one of their parents are working over here.

If David Cameron needed the approval of 27 other nations to get his minor changes and we've had no success in the last 55 EU votes in which we've had an interest, I'd be very interested to know where those like Mr Duff imagine they're going to get their 'democratic solutions' from?

Phil Granger,
West Malling

Will the PM tell us the truth?

IT'S time David Cameron explained how less than a year ago he was insisting that Brexit was an option, and that Britain could prosper as an independent nation, yet now he speaks of Brexit in cataclysmic terms.

He also needs to explain why he chose to risk offering the British people a vote on Brexit if he regards it as a disaster in the making. Either he was lying then or he is lying now.

Roger Williams,
Plaxtol

Leaving will not solve exports

I WAS frankly puzzled by Reg Bell's letter [KoS, last week] in which he claims that leaving the EU would improve the plight of animals being traded across Europe.

Mr Bell says, quite rightly, that the EU has reported that the regulations, introduced by the EU, are not being enforced consistently. But the regulations are at least in place and, rather than walking away, we should be working with the EU to press the individual governments to fulfil their commitments.

Craig Mackinlay's attempt to amend the harbours, docks and piers clauses act 1847 to allow councils to ban live animal exports through a 10-minute rule bill has attracted some interest. It is, however, a 10-minute bill and not government policy.

It will not be "the big boot of the EU" which will put an end to Mr Mackinlay's bill but the big boot of the Westminster parliamentary time table.

I realise Mr Mackinlay wants to use the issue to promote his anti-EU stance, but it really would be more impressive if he worked to get the provisions of his bill incorporated into government policy. However, given the present government's tendency to U-turn, even that would be no guarantee.

Mike Eddy,
Labour leader, Dover District Council

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Optimism may let in a trading headache

WHETHER Britain will be better off inside or outside the EU depends greatly on how optimistic one is as to the UK's ability to compete in the world economy.

That said, the terms on which we trade with other countries are crucially important. In other words, how much do we need them compared with how much they need us?

There is often this assumption that other EU nations are very worried about Brexit. If the leaders of Slovakia, Belgium, Italy etc are having sleepless nights due to this issue, I'd love to know. Indeed many may be relishing the possibilities of carving up areas of trade where Britain dominates.

With 44 per cent of UK exports going to the EU, in return for seven per cent of theirs coming here, it is clear where the power lies. The most likely and probably best possible deal will be for the UK to join the European Economic Area along with Norway. This means accepting free movement of goods, services, capital and people, paying into the EU's social and cohesion fund, while having no say and no opt-outs of any new policies or directives. Any other arrangement is just too complicated for EU members to contemplate as all 26 have to decide that every paragraph of the final agreement is not against their national interest.

An alternative is sometimes put forward that the UK could boost its trade with non-EU countries. The two largest economies are China and the USA, both of which have sufficient economic power to ensure they would get the better of any deal with the UK.

However, it is not all doom and gloom, there is one large, rich and stable market closer to home we already have a good deal with. The best way of staying within it while retaining influence is to vote 'remain'.

Jorge Shaft
Canterbury

Bolton has got it wrong on votes

WITH regard to the election of PCC, does Ukip's Henry Bolton think all his votes were from people who usually vote for another party? I think not as the vote placed him second, similar to last year's Westminster elections.

I, like many voters, do not always vote for the party in local elections. I have a look at what the candidates have to say and often vote for the person, not the party.

Last time around the people of Kent voted for Ann Barnes an independent candidate with what looked like, on paper, a very relevant background and experience in the job. That did not go too well did it?

Perhaps this time round the people of Kent have looked at the candidates and decided a fresh, young face with new ideas might be the answer for this position.

If Mr Bolton's supporters can't be bothered to support their candidate by placing a vote on the day then it is his campaign that is poor and not "tribal politics". Or could it be that the people of Kent are fed up with the Ukip attack on our neighbours who have chosen to live here? And is that the reason why his campaign failed?

Paul Gotch,
Folkestone

Fix the roads for us poor cyclists

I DON'T ride a bike for pleasure or exercise, but to get from Oare into Faversham.

I want all roads repaired! It is impossible to cycle near Faversham in the dark because of the pot holes.

Marika Sherwood,
Oare

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4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent



Botany Bay
by **Dennis Jackson, Margate**

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk



LIGHTNING: Suzuki's new Baleno looks set to be a hit

'Lightning' Suzuki joins the Swift

FIRST DRIVE: Suzuki keeps widening its small car line-up and it's adding up to a sales boom for the Japanese marque...

SUZUKI has doubled up on its super-mini offerings. Joining the excellent Swift, is the slightly larger Baleno (from £12,999) yet there's still nothing to tackle the so-called Ford Focus and Mondeo market sectors.

Still, Suzuki must be doing something right: it's just had its most successful UK quarter ever, with sales currently 15 per cent up.

The Baleno can only drive this further; a far cry from its dreary predecessor (1995-2002) Suzuki reckons it will attract young families who have outgrown the Swift, plus downsizers who like the Baleno's impressive specifications.

The Baleno name means 'lightning' or 'flash' in Italian, yet there is no 0-62mph time in the line-up below 11 seconds.

Bottom end power delivers some sporty credibility though, partly thanks to the use of high-tensile steel driving down body weight, clever aerodynamic work – particularly to the car's underside – and some brilliant engine technology.

The star and likely best seller is the 110bhp 1.0-litre Boosterjet engine: it revs beautifully, only revealing the typically uneven beat of its three-cylinder turbocharged layout when you abuse the throttle, which you may be tempted to, as this handles as well you expect from a sister model to the classy Swift.



But Suzuki insiders revealed that the alternative 89bhp 1.2 Dualjet powertrain could yet be a wild card.

The starting price is £500 dearer, but its higher spec actually makes it £500 cheaper than its Boosterjet equivalent.

For that you get slightly less performance and joie de vivre, but the smoothness of a four-cylinder assisted by a tiny electric motor – it is Suzuki's first mild hybrid and allows an official combined 70.6mpg and tax-free CO2 emissions (94g/km).

Interior plastics might scratch easily in places, but the Baleno cabin is robust, well-arranged and spacious, with a large boot (320 litres) and versatile load space (756 litres).

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KENT LIFE

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Mokka is now served without lumps

Vauxhall's crowd-pleasing crossover/SUV has grown-up, largely thanks to some new engines to complement an affordable and well-made package writes **Steve Loader...**

Vauxhall Mokka Tech Line 1.6 CDTi (110PS) Ecoflex

Price:	from £18,614
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Mitsubishi ASX

THERE was more than a verbal association with coffee surrounding the launch of the Vauxhall Mokka.

Like a cup of instant with a careless dash of powdered milk, the crossover seemed rather lumpy and unrefined – not what you want in a car already styled more for impact than admiration.

Four years on though, and the Mokka taste has been transformed by some new engines – a similar story to the launch phases of several recent Vauxhall models.

As a result, the Mokka has gone from being a bit of a duffer to one of the market's best-loved crossover cum SUV models, all the more so because it sits nicely between cars like the Nissan Juke and Peugeot 2008, yet could be classed – at a stretch – with the bigger Nissan Qashqai, which started the crossover craze.

But if its size is something of a crowd pleaser, it also looks like a lot of car for the money. Indeed, you would be hard-pressed to get a conventional hatchback that delivers as much as the Mokka from a starting price of £16,789.







And despite the chunkiness that goes with the territory, the Mokka is ruggedly stylish against many rivals, including the Juke and 2008.

The car's muscular, compact body also has short overhangs allowing 4x4 versions to deliver surprisingly good off-road ability, though a raised yet still modest ground clearance argues against any serious yomping.

Nevertheless, the marketeers will bang on about the Mokka's appeal to those with active lifestyles who want 4x4, and maybe the brand's retract-able bumper-mounted FlexFix bike-carrier.

But most Mokka buyers opt for the economy-minded front-wheel drive versions like the Tech Line 1.6 CDTi (110PS) Ecoflex model tested here, and are happy to pilot this 'urban warrior' of a car around town.

They will be confident that the height and legroom suggested by its chunky and tall profile can cope with most family needs, even if the back seat is a bit cramped for three abreast.

Occupants do enjoy a high perch and good views out though, while everything feels sturdy and works well with trimming at the high standard now expected from Vauxhall, including lots of soft touch or padded plastic worthy of comparison with so-called premium brands that really ought to be feeling and heeding the pressure in this area.

However, the car's driving dynamics are still a bit off the pace, with some leaning on the bends – perhaps the price for a well-damped and comfortable ride – though I was impressed with the power and refinement of the test car's 1.6-litre diesel engine.

Stowage in the cabin is good, with lots of family friendly cubby holes, while the 362-litre boot murders the smaller Juke's paltry 207 litres.

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THE IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL HAVE:

- A passion for publishing
- An understanding of brand awareness and advertising solutions
- The ability to produce and action effective ideas and promotions
- Resilience and influential communication skills to overcome objections
- The ability to secure new business

In return we are offering up to £18k basic with bonus OTE potential of 8.4k. This would be paid on a pro rata basis for 3 days ie £10.8k and OTE potential of £5k. The benefits include five weeks annual leave, and a contributory pension and life assurance scheme (after qualifying period). A wide range of voluntary benefits include a cycle scheme, childcarevouchers, contributory private health scheme and Archant Gold (charity matched funding).

If you think you have the talent we require, are ambitious, target driven and want to be part of our growth plans then we want to hear from you immediately.

Field Sales Executive

A new role has been created in Archant Kent for a sales executive to build, maintain and develop our relationships with our existing clients who advertise in Kent on Sunday, Kent Life both in print and online.

Kent on Sunday is the award-winning county newspaper for Kent. It concentrates on the issues that matter to people in the county. Kent Life is the current Magazine of the Year for the county. It is the glossy paid-for lifestyle magazine that celebrates all that is great about living here.

You will handle our existing customers' accounts, reinforcing the benefits of longer term print and digital advertising in our titles as well as alerting them to new opportunities.

With our excellent product training and our continuous development programme, we'll show you how to develop first class solutions for our customers, cultivate
excellent business relationships and present effective and innovative ideas that will provide real value and response for our customers.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL HAVE:

- A passion for publishing
- An understanding of brand awareness and advertising solutions
- The ability to produce and action effective ideas and promotions
- Proven face-to-face B2B sales experience
- Resilience and influential communication skills to overcome objections
- The ability to secure new business and manage existing accounts
- The self-motivation and organisation to work remotely
- A full valid driving licence

In return we are offering up to £23k basic with bonus OTE potential of £8.4k per annum as well as a company car, laptop and phone.

If you think you have the talent we require, are ambitious, target driven and want to be part of our growth plans then we want to hear from you immediately.

To find out more:
www.archant.co.uk/vacancies
or email: employment@archant.co.uk

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116 STOPPING UP OF LAND AT UNDERHILL ROAD, DIBGATE CAMP, SHORNCLIFFE, FOLKESTONE

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Folkestone Magistrates' Court on 5 July 2016 at 10:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land at Underhill Road, Dibgate Camp, Shorncliffe, Folkestone as edged red on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform David McKnight by post to Legal Services, The Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ or by email david.mcknight@kent.gov.uk before 25 June 2016 quoting reference number LS/21/106057/608.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact David McKnight using the contact details shown above.

ROGER WILKIN
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND WASTE

LICENSING ACT 2003: Application for Premises Licence

Craig and Ball Ltd of Milos, 15 The Parade, Margate CT9 1EY has applied to Thanet District Council, P.O. Box 9, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent for the Grant of a Premises Licence under the Licensing Act 2003.

A copy of the application may be inspected during normal office hours at the Thanet District Council offices, address above.

The licensable activities will be Supply of Alcohol from10:00 to 02:00 hrs every day; Films, Live and Recorded Music, Performances of Dance and Anything of a Similar Description from 08:00 to 02:00 hrs every day; Late Night Refreshment from 23:00 to 02:30hrs every day. All Licensable activities to continue on New Year's Eve from the end of Permitted Hours to the beginning of Permitted hours on New Year's Day.

Any representations in respect of the application should be made in writing to the Licensing Department, Thanet District Council, P.O. Box 9 Cecil Street, Margate, Kent by 10th June 2016.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5000.

Licensing Act 2003 Application for a New Premises Licence

Name of Applicant: Mr Daniel Pain & Mr Nicholas Ervin

Premises: Queen Phillippa Bed & Breakfast High Street, Queenborough, Sheerness Kent, ME11 5AQ

Proposed Licensable activities:

Sale of Alcohol Monday – Sunday 12 :00 – 22 :00

Date to make representations by: 13th June 2016

Any objections to this application must be made in writing to The Licensing Department

Swale Borough Council
Swale House
East Street
Sittingbourne
Kent, ME10 3HT.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable, on summary conviction, to a maximum fine of £5,000

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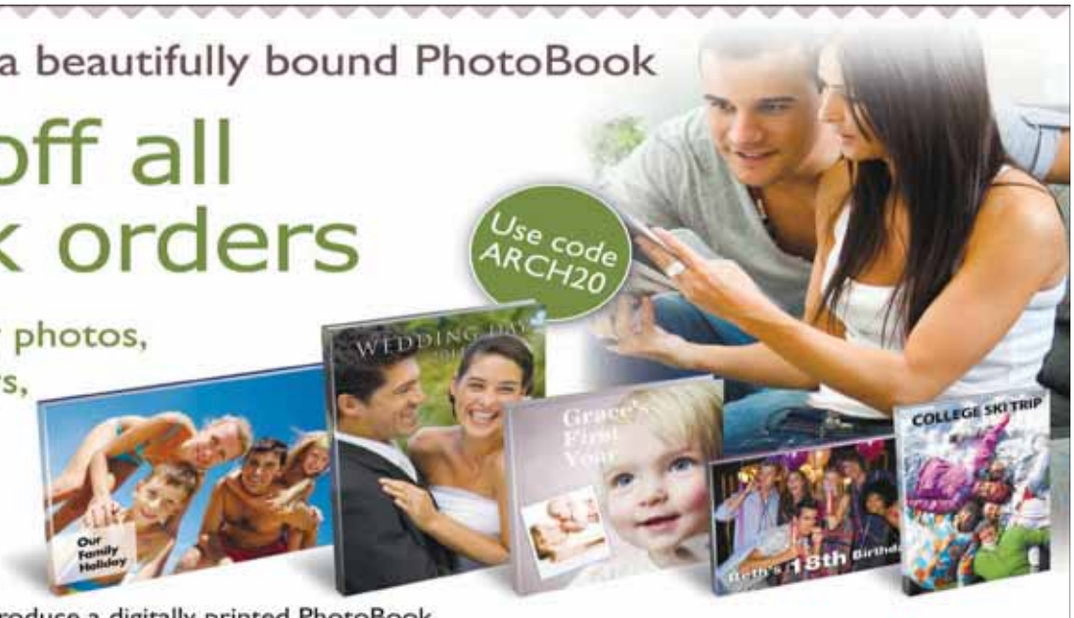
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HOME: Maidstone United's Gallagher Stadium

Maidstone won't stand in Jay's way

Stones boss has masterminded back-to-back promotions

Football

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

MAIDSTONE United chief executive Bill Williams says the club will not stand in its manager's way if the big boys come calling over the summer.

Jay Saunders last weekend guided the club to back-to-back promotions when the Stones beat Ebbsfleet United on penalties to secure a place in the National League – England's premier non-league division.

Coupled with a money-spinning cup run last year, the job Saunders has done at the Gallagher Stadium has been nothing short of remarkable, and those higher up the football pyramid will surely be keeping tabs on the 37-year-old.

However, while Williams insists he is keen to keep hold of his man in the dugout, he says Maidstone will not block his path should other job offers begin to materialise.

"Jay has done a superb job, and we hope that he'll identify a few players to bring in to help us in the National League next season," he told KoS.

"We have a good, transparent relationship with everyone at the club, and I wouldn't be surprised if people are looking closely at him because what he has achieved is fantastic.

"But we're not in the business of standing in people's way, as we proved with Chris Smalling."

The defender, who was this week named in Roy Hodgson's preliminary England squad for Euro 2016, played at the Gallagher until 2008 before moving to Fulham and subsequently Manchester United, where he is now one of the first names on the team-sheet at Old Trafford.

"If a Premier League team came in for Jay, why would we stop him?" Williams added.

"But we haven't had any contact and we know that he is very happy here and he's part of our family.

"We've got a young manager and a young team and we believe the future is very exciting."

■ See pages 14 and 15 of this week's paper for full coverage of Maidstone United's promotion, and the financial costs that come as a consequence of the success.

Dover sidecar star Charlwood back at Brands

Sidecar

A DOVER sidecar racer is heading to the familiar ground of Brands Hatch for the second round of the championship this weekend.

For the first time in years, the sidecar races will take place between the two superbike races instead of at the very end of the day.

This prime time slot will ensure that more eyes will be on Dover's Ryan Charlwood and his partner Ricky Stevens as they defend their title against the likes of Tim Reeves and Greg Cluze.

Team manager Paul Knapton said: "We have been lobbying for years for a better time slot at the British superbike championship.

"Many BSB attendees love sidecars but with it usually being at the end of the day, most people have to pack up and leave before the race is done.



RACE: Ryan Charlwood in action

"We're really excited to have been scheduled earlier at Brands Hatch, it means the guys can give the fans a race to remember."

Since round one at Oulton Park, the pair have been working to get racing fit.

Charlwood said: "The first race at Oulton Park went well, we started the season with some good points, but we could have done better, especially in the first two laps.

"We have to be in top physical condition to keep performing so I have been training hard these past couple of weeks, sometimes running the equivalent of a half marathon along the scenic Dover cliffs."

The team has also been making minor adjustments to their sidecar, mainly on the suspension, to ensure a smooth race on Sunday.

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Denly hits 206 but Kent held to Northants draw

JOE Denly recorded his first double century last week in Kent's county championship draw with Northamptonshire

The 30-year-old batsman ended with an unbeaten 206, and spoke of the difficult conditions in which he achieved his feat.

"It was a strange pitch up at Wantage Road," he said.

"They'd shaved both ends and left a covering of grass in the middle – but it was just dead grass.

"It took some getting used to.

"When I first got out there in our first innings the ball was relatively new and coming onto the bat okay, but there was low bounce and little in the way of seam movement.

"Northamptonshire had one or two slips in, put a lot of men in front of the bat and bowled stump to stump.

"That meant there were long periods when it was tough to score.

"It was just a case of getting through, batting time, not giving your wicket away and frustrating them until the runs came."



STAR: Joe Denly



FIGHT: Joe Draper

Draper wins on mixed evening in west Sussex

MAIDSTONE boxing coach Terry Hadaway says he is proud of all of his young fighters, despite an evening of mixed fortunes competing in one of the country's biggest competitions.

Hadaway travelled up to the Copthorne Effingham Park Hotel in West Sussex last Saturday with four of the club's prospects, and although only Joe Draper came away victorious, he was impressed with how they coped on the big stage.

"We had a great night with all four of the boys in tough fights, but even though only one of the lads won, I'm proud of everything they achieved," said Hadaway.

Draper was victorious over Lewis Mackay but there were respectable performances from Charlie Adams and Mark Hiscott, while Lenny Fuller was forced out through injury.

Margate snap up top goalscorer

MARGATE have announced the signing of the striker who finished the season as the league's top goalscorer.

Elliott Buchanan, 26, joins from Bishops Stortford where he bagged 28 goals in the National League South last season, including four against the Blues at the ProKit Stadium in March.

Manager Nikki Bull was delighted to capture another proven goalscorer ahead of the 2016/17 season and said: "It is magnificent to be able to announce the signing of Elliott.

"Last year we struggled to score goals so I was delighted to be able to complete this signing early on in the summer."

Buchanan has also played for Newport County, Staines Town, AFC Wimbledon and Bromley.

Keep up-to-date with all Kent's sports news via social media on:
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